SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO

HUDSON

SHAKESPEARE'S

OTHELLO,

THE MOOR OF VENICE

WITH

INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

BY THE

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GINN AND COMPANY
BOSTON · NEW YORK · CHICAGO · LONDON
ATLANTA · DALLAS · COLUMBUS · SAN FRANCISCO

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The Athenæum Press
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INTRODUCTION.

Date of the Composition.

THE TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO was entered at the Stationers' by Thomas Walkley, "under the hands of Sir George Buck and of the Wardens," October 6, 1621, and was published in quarto the next year. It was also included in the folio collection of 1623, and was printed again in quarto in 1630. These three copies differ more or less among themselves: in particular, the folio has a number of passages, amounting in all to some hundred and sixty lines, that are wanting in the quarto of 1622. On the other hand, the latter has a few lines that are wanting in the folio; while the quarto of 1630 seems to have been made up from the other two. On the whole, the text has reached us in a pretty fair condition; though there are a few passages where the reading stands much in question, and gives little hope of being altogether cleared from doubt.

Until a recent date, this great drama was commonly supposed to have been among the latest of the Poet's writing. But, within the last fifty years, two alleged manuscript records have been produced which would quite upset the old belief. One of these was given by Collier from "the Egerton Papers," showing the play to have been acted before Queen Elizabeth at Harefield, the seat of Lord-Keeper Egerton, in August,

1602. The other, purporting to be from "the Accounts of the Revels at Court," and produced by Mr. Peter Cunningham, represents the piece to have been performed before the King and Court at Whitehall on the 1st of November, 1604. Both of these records, however, have since been set aside by the highest authority as forgeries. So that we are now thrown back upon the old ground; our earliest authentic notice of the play being furnished by Sir Frederic Madden from certain manuscripts in the British Museum. It appears that in the Spring of 1610 Louis Frederic, Duke of Wurtemberg, visited England on a diplomatic mission. Among the manuscripts in question, is an autograph diary, written in French, by Hans Jacob Wurmsser, who accompanied the Duke. The diary extends from the 16th of March to the 24th of July, 1610. Under date of April 30th, we have the following entry: "Went to the Globe, the place where comedies are wont to be played; there the history of the Moor of Venice was represented."

Two other authentic contemporary notices of the play have reached us, which ought, perhaps, to be here set down. The first is from the *Accounts* of Lord Harrington, Treasurer of the Chamber to James the First: "Paid to John Heminge, upon the Council's warrant, dated at Whitehall, 20th of May, 1613, for presenting before the Prince's Highness, the Lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine Elector, fourteen several plays." Then, among the plays specified in the account, are *Much Ado*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Merry Wives*, and *The Moor of Venice*. The other notice is from an elegy on Richard Burbage, the great actor of the Globe company, who died in 1619. The writer gives a list of the principal characters in which Burbage was distinguished, and winds up with the following:

> But let me not forget one chiefest part
> Wherein, beyond the rest, he moved the heart, —
> The grievèd Moor made jealous by a slave,
> Who sent his wife to fill a timeless grave.

The foregoing account obviously concludes *Othello* to have been written in 1609 or early in 1610. And the internal evidence of style and manner is, I think, in entire harmony with that conclusion; the diction, versification, and psychagogic inwardness being such as to speak it into close chronological neighbourhood with *Cymbeline* and *Coriolanus*. So much is this the case, that Verplanck, writing while the account of performance at Harefield was still deemed authentic, thought the play must have been rewritten after that date, and perhaps made as different from what it was at first as the finished *Hamlet* was from the earliest copy. — The play has one item, or seeming item, of internal evidence, which it is not easy to reconcile with the earliest of the forecited notices. It is in iii. 4, where Othello says to Desdemona,

> A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
> But our *new heraldry is hands, not hearts.*

This can hardly be taken otherwise than as an allusion to the new order of the Baronetage which was instituted by King James in 1611; the figure of a bloody hand being among the armorial bearings of those who received the new title. And it is not a little remarkable that, even before the above-mentioned forgeries were exposed, Mr. Grant White still held it certain that this passage at least must have been written "after the creation of the first baronets." But, as this would draw the date of the writing down two years later than we have found it to be, there appears no way of accounting for the passage but as an after-insertion.

Borrowed Matter.

The tragedy was founded on one of Giraldi Cinthio's novels. Whether the story was accessible to Shakespeare in English is uncertain, no translation of so early a date having been discovered. But we are not without indications of his having known enough of Italian to take the matter directly from the original. The Poet can hardly be said to have borrowed any thing more than a few incidents and the outline of the plot; the character, passion, pathos, and poetry being entirely his own. The following abstract of the tale will show the nature and extent of his obligations:

A Moorish captain, distinguished for his valour and conduct, was in the service of the Venetian Republic. While living at Venice, his noble qualities captivated the heart of a very beautiful and virtuous lady called Desdemona. He returned her love; and they were married, against the wishes of her friends. Some time after the marriage, he was appointed to the military command of Cyprus, and was accompanied thither by his wife. He had for his ensign a man of a pleasing person, but a very wicked heart. The ensign was also married, his wife being a discreet and handsome woman, who was much liked by Desdemona; and the two passed a good deal of their time together. Both of these went with the Moor to his command; as did also his lieutenant, a man to whom he was strongly attached, and who was highly esteemed by Desdemona for her husband's sake. The ensign became enamoured of Desdemona; but, on finding he could make no impression upon her, his passion soon turned to revenge: so he took it into his head that she was in love

with the lieutenant, and determined to work the ruin of them both by accusing them to the Moor. The Moor was so strong in love for his wife, and in friendship for the lieutenant, that the villain knew he would have to be very cunning and artful in his practice, else the mischief would recoil upon himself. After a while, the lieutenant wounded a soldier on guard, for which he was cashiered by the Moor; and the lady, grieved at her husband's losing so good a friend, went to pleading for his restoration. Thereupon the ensign began to work his craft, by insinuating to the Moor that her solicitations were for no good cause. On being required to speak more plainly, he directly accused her of preferring the lieutenant to her husband on account of the latter's complexion. The Moor then told him he ought to have his tongue cut out for thus attacking the lady's honour, and demanded ocular proof of his accusation. The ensign then began a course of downright lying, but still managed so craftily as to draw the other more and more into his toils, and finally engaged to furnish the proof required.

Now Desdemona often went to the ensign's house, and spent some time with his wife, taking with her a handkerchief which the Moor had given her, and which, being delicately embroidered in the Moorish style, was much prized by them both. The ensign had a little girl that Desdemona was very fond of; and one day, while she was caressing the child, he stole away the handkerchief so adroitly that she did not perceive the act. His next device was to leave the handkerchief on the lieutenant's bolster; where the latter soon found it, and, knowing it to be Desdemona's, went to return it to her. The Moor, hearing his knock, and going to the window, asked who was there; whereupon the lieutenant, fearing his anger, ran away without answering.

The ensign was very glad of this incident, as it gave him more matter to work with; and he contrived one day to have an interview with the lieutenant in a place where the Moor could see them. In the course of their talk, which was on a different subject, he laughed much, and by his gestures made as if he were greatly surprised at the other's disclosures. The interview over, and the Moor asking what had passed between them, the ensign then, after much feigning of reluctance, said the lieutenant had boasted of his frequent meetings with Desdemona, and how, the last time he was with her, she had given him the handkerchief. Shortly after, the Moor asked his wife for the handkerchief; and, as she could not find it, this strengthened his suspicions into conviction: still, before proceeding to extremities, he craved the further proof of seeing the handkerchief in the lieutenant's possession. So, while the lieutenant's mistress was sitting at the window of his house, and copying the embroidery, the ensign pointed her out to the Moor. The two then arrange for killing both the parties: the ensign sets upon the lieutenant in the night, and wounds him; but he fights manfully, and raises an alarm, which draws a crowd to the spot, the ensign himself appearing among them, as if roused by the cry. Upon hearing of this, the lady speaks her grief for the lieutenant; which so enrages the Moor, that he forthwith contrives her death. The ensign hides himself in a closet of her chamber; at the time appointed he makes a noise; Desdemona rises and goes to see what it is, and he then beats her to death with a stocking full of sand; the Moor meanwhile accusing her of the crime, and she protesting her innocence. This done, they pull down the ceiling upon her, and run out crying that the house is falling: people rush in, and find her dead under the beams, no one suspecting the

truth of the matter. But the Moor soon becomes distracted with remorse. Hating the sight of the ensign, he degrades him, and drives him out of his company; whereupon the villain goes to plotting revenge upon him. He reveals to the lieutenant the truth about the lady's death, omitting his own share in it; the lieutenant accuses the Moor to the Senate, and calls in the ensign as his witness. The Moor is imprisoned, banished, and finally put to death by his wife's kindred. The ensign, returning to Venice, and continuing at his old practices, is taken up, put to the torture, and racked so violently, that he soon dies.

Such, in brief, are the leading incidents of the novel. Of course the parts of Othello and Desdemona, Iago and Emilia, Cassio and Bianca, were suggested by what the Poet found in the tale. The novel has nothing answering to the part of Roderigo; nor did it furnish any of the names except *Desdemona*. Some of Iago's characteristic traits may be said to have been taken from the ensign: but this is about the whole of the Poet's obligation in the matter of character. The tale describes the Moor as valiant, prudent, and capable, Desdemona as virtuous and beautiful; and states that she loved the Moor for his nobleness of character, and that her family was much opposed to the match. These are all the hints which Shakespeare had towards the mighty delineations of character in this play, as distinguished from the incidents of the plot. For, as Mr. White remarks, "of the complex psychological structure of the various personages, and of their harmonious mental and moral action, there is not even a rudimentary hint in the story." It is to be observed, also, that Roderigo serves as a most effective occasion in the drama; Iago's most inward and idiomatic traits being made to transpire upon him; and this in such a

way as to lift the characters of Othello and Desdemona into a much higher region, and invest them with a far deeper and more pathetic interest.

Time of the Action.

The island of Cyprus, where the scene of the drama is chiefly laid, became subject to the Republic of Venice, and was first garrisoned with Venetian troops, in 1471. After that time, the only attempt ever made upon that island by the Turks was under Selim the Second, in 1570. It was then invaded by a powerful force, and conquered in 1571; since which time it has continued a part of the Turkish Empire. The play represents that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes for the purpose of invading Cyprus; that the fleet started towards Cyprus, went back to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its course to Cyprus. These are historical facts, and took place when Mustapha, Selim's general, attacked Cyprus, in May, 1570; which is therefore the true period of the action.

Relative Merits.

In respect of general merit, *Othello* unquestionably stands in the same rank with the Poet's three other great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*. As to its relative place among the four, the best judges, as might be expected, hold different views. In compass and reach of thought, it is certainly inferior to *Hamlet;* in the elements and impressions of moral terror, to *Macbeth;* in breadth and variety of characterization, to *King Lear:* but it has one advantage over the others, in that the passion, the action, the interest, all

take their growth in the soil of domestic life; for which cause the play has a better hold on the common sympathies of mankind. It is indeed the greatest of domestic dramas. And I am apt to think it the *best-organized* of all Shakespeare's plays. As a piece of dramatic architecture, *Othello* seems to me so nearly perfect, that I do not care to entertain any thought of how it might be better. On the whole, perhaps it may be safely affirmed of the four tragedies in question, that the most competent readers will always like that best which they read last. For my own part, I acknowledge a slight preference for *King Lear;* but I find it not easy to keep up such preference while either of the others is fresher in my thoughts.

Dramatic Use of the First Act.

Dr. Johnson winds up his excellent remarks on *Othello* thus: "Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity." Of course the meaning here is, that the play would have been the better for such a change. On the plan thus proposed, the whole of the first Act must needs have been withheld, except so much of it as might be cast into the narrative form. That Act is eminently rich in character, in life, in every thing indeed for which the dramatic form is most desirable. What narration could supply the place, for instance, of Othello's address to the Senate? Or, those early outcroppings of Iago's wickedness, how could they have been turned into narrative without defeating the proper spirit and impression of them? Any attempt, indeed, to produce the best parts of that Act in the narrative form would have made the drama even more irregular than it is now. For in that

case the irregularity would have been in the very substance of the work. And what is mere regularity of form good for, that it should be purchased at such a cost?

But I have still deeper reasons for preferring the play as it is. The first Act is, I think, strictly fundamental to the others, as it ought to be, and hence necessary to a right understanding of them. It may be observed generally, indeed, that the Poet displays excellent judgment in his opening scenes. Nor have we any better instance of this than in the case of *Othello;* which begins at the beginning, and goes regularly forward, instead of beginning in the middle, as Dr. Johnson would have it, and then going both ways. In the first Act we have a perfect seminary of the whole representation; the prolific germs, so to speak, out of which the entire work is evolved. From the matter of the opening scenes we gain just such a forecast or preconception of the characters as is needful in order to make their after-course thoroughly intelligible. And the not duly attending to what is there disclosed has caused a good deal of false criticism on the play. This is especially true in the case of Iago, who, from inattention to his earlier developments, has been supposed to act from revenge; and then, as no adequate motives for such revenge could be found, the character has been thought unnatural. I undertake to say, indeed, that neither Iago nor Othello can be rightly interpreted at all, without very special reference to what is unfolded of them in the first Act. For there it is that we are to look for the first principles or seminal ideas of those characters.

We often speak of men as acting thus or thus, according as they are influenced from without. And in one sense this is true; yet not so but that the man rather determines the motive than the motive the man. For the same influences

often move men quite variously, according to their several predispositions. What is with one a motive of virtue, is with another a motive to vice, and with a third no motive at all. On the other hand, where the outward actions are the same, the inward springs are often very different. So that we cannot truly understand a man, unless we first have some insight of his actuating principle, which may serve as a key, or as a clew, to his external behaviour. In brief, as a man's actions are the proper index of his character, so his character is the light whereby that index is to be read. And so, in the case of Othello, we must first have some insight of his character, and of the characters that act upon him, before we can rightly judge whether the main-spring of his action be jealousy or something else. So too in the case of Iago: that he has no external provocation to the part he acts, does not necessarily make him unnatural; for he may have an innate passion for mischief so strong as to supersede all such provocation.

Delineation of Iago.

The main passions and proceedings of the drama take their start from Iago. And the first Act amply discloses what he is made of and moved by. From what he there does, it is plain enough that his actuating principle lies not in revenge, but in a certain original malignity of nature. As if on purpose to prevent any mistake as to his springs of action, he is set forth in various aspects having no direct bearing on the main course of the play. He comes before us exercising his faculties on the dupe Roderigo, and thereby spilling out the secret of his habitual motives and impulses.

We know, from the first, that the bond of union between them is the purse. Roderigo thinks he is buying up Iago's

talents and services. This is just what Iago means to have him think. Here we have, on the one side, pride of purse; on the other, pride of intellect. It is even doubtful which glories most, the dupe in having money to bribe talents, or the villain in having wit to catch money. Still it is plain enough that Iago, with a pride of intellectual mastery far stronger than his love of lucre, cares less for the money than for the fun of wheedling and swindling others out of it. To trace through in detail the course and method of Iago's proceedings with Roderigo; to note, step by step, how he works and winds and governs him to his purpose; would use up too much space. Wonderful indeed are the arts whereby the rogue wins and maintains his ascendency over the gull. During some parts of their conversation, we can almost see the former worming himself into the latter, like a corkscrew into a cork. And the sagacity with which Iago feels and forescents his way into Roderigo is only equalled by the skill with which, while clinching the nail of one conquest, he prepares the subject, by a sort of forereaching process, for a further conquest.

A single item of his practice in this behalf is all I can stay to notice. The hardest part of his scheme on Roderigo is to engage him in a criminal quest of Desdemona. For the passion with which she has inspired him is hardly consistent with any purpose of dishonouring her. At first, he hopes her father will break off the match with Othello, so that she may still be open to an honest solicitation; but when he finds her married, and the marriage allowed by her father, he is for giving up in despair. But Iago again besets him like an evil angel, and plies his witchcraft with augmented vigour. Himself an utter atheist of female virtue, his cue is to debauch Roderigo with his own atheism. He therefore at the same time flatters

his pride by urging the power of money, and inflames his passion by urging the frailty of woman; as knowing that the greatest preventive of dishonourable passion is faith in the virtue of its object. Throughout this undertaking, Iago's passionless soul revels amid lewd thoughts and images, like a spirit broke loose from the pit. With his nimble fancy, his facility and felicity of combination, fertile, fluent, and apposite in plausibilities, he literally overwhelms the poor fellow's power of resistance. I refer to the dialogue where, finding the man's wits too thick for much argument, he keeps iterating the phrase, "put money in thy purse," and thus fairly beats down his defences by mere emphasis and stress. The issue proves that he knew his man perfectly. Nor can any thing surpass the fiendish chuckle of self-satisfaction with which he turns from his conquest to sneer at the victim:

> Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
> For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
> If I would time expend with such a snipe,
> But for my sport and profit.

Roderigo, if not preoccupied with vices, is at least empty of virtues; so that Iago has but to work upon his unfortified posts, and ruin him through these. But the Moor has no such openings: the villain can reach him only through his virtues; has no way to crush him but by turning his honour and integrity against him. Knowing his "perfect soul," he dare not make to him the least tender of dishonourable services, as such an act would be sure to kindle his resentment. To him, therefore, he uses the closest craft, the artfullest simulation. Still he takes shrewd care not to whiten the sepulchre so much as to provoke a scrutiny of its contents; not boasting of his moral scruples at all, but rather modestly con-

fessing them; as though, being a soldier, he feared that such things might speak more for his virtue than his manhood.

I must notice a few particulars of his practice on Othello. And I may as well begin by remarking how, to the end that his accusation of others may stand clear of distrust, he prefaces it by accusing himself. Thus he affects to disqualify his own judgment touching the matter he has on foot:

> I confess, it is my nature's plague
> To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
> Shapes faults that are not.

Here he of course designs the contrary impression; as, in actual life, men sometimes acknowledge real vices, in order to be acquitted of them. Acting, too, as if he spared no pains to be right, yet still feared he was wrong, his very opinions carry the weight of facts, as having forced themselves upon him against his will. When, watching his occasion, he proceeds to set the scheme of mischief at work, his mind seems struggling with some terrible secret which he dare not let out, yet cannot keep in; which breaks from him in spite of himself, and even because of his fear to utter it. He thus manages to be heard, and still to seem overheard; that so he may not be held responsible for his words, any more than if he had spoken in his sleep. And there is, withal, a dark, frightful significance in his manner, which puts the hearer in an agony of curiosity. All this will appear by a brief extract from the dialogue which follows close upon Desdemona's first urging of her suit in Cassio's behalf:

> *Iago.* Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
> Know of your love?
> *Othel.* He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?
> *Iago.* But for the satisfaction of my thought;
> No further harm.

Othel. Why of thy thought, Iago?
Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her.
Othel. O, yes; and went between us very oft.
Iago. Indeed!
Othel. Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?
Is he not honest?
Iago. Honest, my lord?
Othel. Honest! ay, honest.
Iago. My lord, for aught I know.
Othel. What dost thou think?
Iago. Think, my lord?
Othel. Think, my lord! — By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. — Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say but now, thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?
And, when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst *Indeed!*
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst, shut up in thy brain,
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.
Iago. My lord, you know I love you.
Othel. I think thou dost;
And — for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath —
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just
They're close delations, working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.

In this, and in much of what follows, the more Iago refuses to tell his thoughts, the more he sharpens the desire of knowing them: when questioned, he so states his reasons for not speaking, as, in effect, to compel the Moor to extort the secret from him. For instance, in those well-known lines,

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;

> 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:
> But he that filches from me my good name
> Robs me of that which not-enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed;—

in these lines, he of course means to have it understood that nothing but tenderness of others restrains him from uttering what would blast them. Thus he kindles the intensest craving to know what the dreadful truth is that so ties up his tongue. For his purpose is, not only to deceive Othello, but to get his thanks for deceiving him:

> I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;
> Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb;
> Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
> For making him egregiously an ass,
> And practising upon his peace and quiet
> Even to madness.

Here we have a pungent spurt of that essential malignity which causes Iago to gloat over the agonies he inflicts. As a stronger instance of the same thing, take the passage where he indulges his terrible energy of expression directly on the Moor, and quietly sucks in the pleasure of seeing him writhe under it:

> *Iago.* O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
> It is the green-eyed monster, which doth make
> The meat it feeds on: that husband lives in bliss
> Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
> But, O, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
> Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!
> *Othel.* O misery!
> *Iago.* Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
> But riches fineless is as poor as Winter
> To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
> Good Heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
> From jealousy!

In this piece of virulent eloquence Iago's fiendish heart is

grimly sporting itself at the torments which his speech stings into the Moor.

In further illustration of this character, I may observe that the healthy, natural mind is marked by openness to impressions and inspirations from without, so that the social, moral, and religious sentiments give law to the inner man. But our ancient despises all this. His creed is, that the yielding to any inspirations from without argues an ignoble want of mental force. The religions of our nature, as love, honour, reverence, fidelity, loyalty, domestic awe, all such, according to this liberal and learned spirit, are but "a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will." He scoffs at them. Hence, when walking amidst the better growths of humanity, he is "nothing, if not critical." So he pulls up every flower, however beautiful, to find a flaw in the root, and of course flaws the root in pulling it. His mind indeed is utterly unimpressible, receives nothing, yields to nothing, but cuts its way everywhere like a flint. This is well shown in his first interview with Desdemona. He goes to scorching the women, one after another, with his caustic satire. To stop off his flow of scoffing wit, she asks him, "But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed?" whereupon we have this:

> *Iago.* She that was ever fair, and never proud;
> Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
> Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;
> Fled from her wish, and yet said, *now I may;*
> She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
> Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;
> She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind;
> See suitors following, and not look behind;
> She was a wight, if ever such wight were, —
> *Desde.* To do what?
> *Iago.* To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

We have another characteristic outcome of like sort in the brief dialogue which he holds with Cassio about the heroine, just before he beguiles that noble-souled piece of infirmity into the drunken brawl which causes him to be cashiered:

Cas. Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not ten o'clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona, whom let us not therefore blame.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye; and yet, methinks, right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

In these few short speeches of Iago is disclosed the inmost soul of a cold intellectual sensualist, his faculties dancing and capering amidst the provocatives of passion, because himself without passion. Senseless or reckless of every thing good, but keenly alive to whatsoever he can turn to a bad use, his mind acts like a sieve, to strain out all the wine, and retain only the lees of womanhood; which lees he delights to hold up as the main ingredients of the sex. And Cassio's very delicacy and religiousness of thought prevent his taking offence at the villain's heartless and profane levity. Iago then goes on to suit himself to all the demands of the frankest joviality. As he is without any feelings, so he can feign them all indifferently to work out his design; casting himself into the boon companion and the singer of pothouse songs with the same facility as into the dark contriver of hellish plots.

His Intellectual Virulence.

I have spoken of the secret delight Iago takes in so framing his speech of seeming friendship to the Moor as to make it rasp and corrode where it touches. The same wantonness of malignant sport appears in his talk to Cassio when the latter is smarting with the sense of having been cashiered for drunkenness. He there uses a style of concealed irony, as being the aptest way to sting his friend; taking for granted that he has no sensibilities of honour to be hurt by what has happened. The dialogue, though richly characteristic of both the speakers, is too long for quotation here. But it would hardly do to omit the soliloquy which closes the scene. Iago persuades the amiable and self-accusing lieutenant to engage Desdemona as his advocate to the Moor, and then, being left alone, communes with himself as follows:

> And what's he, then, that says I play the villain?
> When this advice is free I give and honest,
> Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
> To win the Moor again. For 'tis most easy
> Th' inclining Desdemona to subdue
> In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful
> As the free elements. And then for her
> To win the Moor, — were't to renounce his baptism,
> All seals and symbols of redeemèd sin, —
> His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
> That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
> Even as her appetite shall play the god
> With his weak function. How am I, then, a villain
> To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
> Directly to his good? Divinity of Hell!
> When devils will their blackest sins put on,
> They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
> As I do now: for, while this honest fool
> Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,

> And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
> I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, —
> That she repeals him for her body's lust;
> And, by how much she strives to do him good,
> She shall undo her credit with the Moor:
> So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
> And out of her own goodness make the net
> That shall enmesh them all.

By way of finishing this part of the theme, I will refer to a highly significant point which Verplanck was the first to notice. In one of his speeches to the gull, Iago says, "I have looked upon the world for *four times seven years;* and, since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself." This ascertains his age to be twenty-eight years; though we are apt to think of him as a much older man. The Poet, no doubt, had a wise purpose in making him so young. It marks him out as having an instinctive faculty and aptitude for diabolical machination; it infers his virulence of mind to be something innate, and not superinduced at all by harsh and bitter usage: in brief, it tells us that his expertness in what he calls the "divinity of Hell" is an original gift, and springs from his having a genius for that kind of thing, insomuch that but little practice was needed to perfect him in it. Moreover his youth goes far to explain the trust which others repose in him: they cannot suspect one so young of being either skilled in villainous craft or soured by hard experience of the world; while his polished manners and winning address gain him the credit of superior parts, without breeding any question of his truth. "In a young man," says Verplanck, "the hypocrisy, the knowledge, the dexterous management of the worst and weakest parts of human nature, the recklessness of moral feeling;

even the stern, bitter wit, intellectual and contemptuous, without any of the gayety of youth; are all precocious and peculiar, separating Iago from the ordinary sympathies of our nature, and investing him with higher talent and blacker guilt."

It appears, then, that intellectuality is Iago's proper character; that is, the intellect has in him cast off all allegiance to the moral reason, and become a law unto itself; so that the mere fact of his being able to do a thing is sufficient cause for doing it. For, in such a case, the man naturally comes to act, not for any outward ends or objects, but merely for the sake of acting. — We thus have a cold, dry pruriency of mind, or a lust of the brain, which issues in a fanaticism of mischief, a sort of hungering and thirsting after unrighteousness. Accordingly Iago shows no addiction to sensualities: his passions are concentrated in the head; his desires are of the Satanical order; so that he scorns the lusts of the flesh; or, if indulging them at all, he prefers to do it in a criminal way, as finding more pleasure in the criminality than in any thing else. For such, I take it, is the motive-principle of Satan. Iago seems indeed more fiendish than Milton's Satan: for when the latter first sees Adam and Eve together in Paradise he relents at the prospect of ruining the happiness before him, and prefaces the act with a gush of pity for the victims; whereas Iago, on witnessing the raptures of Othello and Desdemona at their first meeting after the sea-voyage, mutters to himself, as in a transport of jubilant ferocity,

> O, you are well-tuned now!
> But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
> As honest as I am.

Edmund, the villain of *King Lear*, does not so much make

war on Duty as shift her off out of the way to make room for his wit: seeing the road clear but for moral restraints, he politely bows them out of door, that so his faculties may work with entire freedom. Iago differs from him in this respect: positive invasions of Duty are a sport and pastime to him; he even goes out of his way to spit in her face and walk over her. That a thing ought not to be done is with him a special motive for doing it, because, the worse the deed, the more it shows his freedom and power. Hence, in one of his soliloquies, where he speaks of loving Desdemona, he first disclaims any unlawful passion for her, and then adds, parenthetically, "though, peradventure, I stand accountant for as great a sin": as much as to say, that whether guilty or not he did not care, and dared the responsibility at all events. Our great American actor, the elder Booth, in pronouncing these words, used to cast his eyes upwards as if looking Heaven in the face with a sort of defiant smile; thus representing Iago as acknowledging his Maker only to brave Him!

That Iago prefers lying to telling the truth is implied in what I have been saying. Such a preference seems indeed to be a necessary consequence of his lawlessness of intellect. For it is a mistake to suppose a man's love of truth will needs be in proportion to his intellectuality: such inordinateness of mind may even find its chief delight in making lies, because what it most craves is room for activity and display. And so Iago's characteristic satisfaction seems to stand in a practical reversing of moral distinctions; for instance, in causing his falsehood to do the work of truth, or another's truth the work of falsehood. For, to make virtue pass for virtue, and pitch for pitch, is no triumph at all; but to make the one pass for the other, is a triumph

indeed! Iago glories in thus seeming to convict things of untruth; in compelling Nature, as it were, to acknowledge him too much for her. Hence his adroit practice to appear as if serving Roderigo while really using him. Hence his purpose, not merely to deceive the Moor, but to get his thanks for doing so. Therefore it is that he takes such a malicious pleasure in turning Desdemona's conduct wrong side out; for, the more angel she, the greater his triumph in making her seem a devil.

But I cannot sound the depth of Iago's cuuning: in attempting to thread his intricacies, my mind gets bewildered. Sleepless, unrelenting, inexhaustible, with an energy that never flags, and an alertness that nothing can surprise, he outwits every obstacle, and turns it into a help. By the working of his devilish arts, the Moor is brought to distrust all his own original perceptions, to renounce his own understanding, and to see every thing just as Iago would have him see it. And such, in fact, is the villain's aim, the very earnest and pledge of his intellectual mastery.

We can indeed scarce conceive any wickedness into which such a lust and pride of intellect and will may not carry a man. Craving for action of the most exciting kind, there is a fascination for Iago in the very danger of crime. Walking the plain, safe, straightforward path of truth and right, does not excite and occupy him enough: he prefers to thread the dark, perilous intricacies of some hellish plot, or to balance himself, as it were, on a rope stretched over an abyss, where danger stimulates, and success demonstrates, his agility. He has, in short, an insatiable itching of mind, which finds relief in roughing it through the briers and thickets of diabolical undertakings. Or, to vary the figure once more, it is as if one should be so taken with a

passion for dancing over eggs as to make an open floor seem vapid and dull. Even if remorse overtake such a man, its effect is to urge him deeper into crime; as the desperate gamester naturally tries to bury his chagrin at past losses in the increased excitement of a larger stake. For even so remorse, without repentance, serves but to augment the guilt from which it springs.

His Motives Self-generated.

Critics have puzzled themselves a good deal about Iago's motives. The truth is, "natures such as his spin motives out of their own bowels." In Wordsworth's play of *The Borderers*, I find one of the characters described in a manner that fits our ancient rarely well:

> There needs no other motive
> Than that most strange incontinence in crime
> Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him,
> And breath and being; where he cannot govern,
> He will destroy.

If it be objected to this view, that Iago states his motives to Roderigo; I answer, Iago is a liar, and is trying to dupe Roderigo; and he knows he must allege some motives, else his work will not speed. Or, if it be objected that he states them in soliloquy, when there is no one present for him to deceive; again I answer, Yes, there is; the very one he cares most to deceive, namely, himself. And indeed the terms of that statement clearly denote a foregone conclusion, the motives coming in only as an after-thought. He cannot quite look his purpose in the face; it is a little too fiendish for his steady gaze; and he tries to hunt up some motives to appease his qualms of conscience. This is what Cole-

ridge justly calls "the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity"; and well may he add, "how awful it is!"

Much has been said about Iago's acting from revenge. But he has no cause for revenge, unless to deserve his love be such a cause. It is true, he tries to suspect, first the Moor, and then Cassio, of having wronged him: he even finds, or feigns, a certain rumour to that effect; yet shows, by his manner of talking about it, that he does not himself believe it, or rather does not care whether it be true or not. And in the soliloquy which I have quoted, he owns that the reasons he alleges are but pretences, after all. He even boasts of the intention to entrap his victims through their friendship for him; as if his obligations to them were his only provocations against them. For, to bad men, obligations sometimes are provocations. The only wrong they have done him, or that he thinks they have done him, is the fact of their having the virtues and honours that move his envy. This, I take it, is the thought that "like a poisonous mineral gnaws his inwards." In other words, they are nobler and happier than he is, and for this he plots to be revenged by working their ruin through the very gifts for which he envies them. Meanwhile he amuses his reasoning powers by inventing a sort of *ex-post-facto* motives for his purpose, the same wicked busy-mindedness that suggests the crime prompting him to play with the possible reasons for it.

Character of Cassio.

Cassio, all radiant as he is of truth and honour, makes a superb contrast to Iago. His nature is, I am apt to think, the finest-grained and most delicately organized of all Shakespeare's men. He is full-souled and frank-hearted, open,

unsuspecting, and free; so guileless indeed, and so generous withal, that Iago can get no foul suggestion to stick upon him: every thing of the sort just runs right off from his mind, leaving it as clean and sweet as ever. He cannot indeed resist the cup that brims and sparkles with good-fellowship; he is too polite, too manly for that; and his delicacy of organization renders him almost as incapable of wine as a child; it takes hardly more than a thimbleful to overthrow him; and his head, his heart, all his organs and senses, are intoxicated at once. But the same thing that makes him so sensitive to wine makes him equally sensitive to the noblest and divinest inspirations of manhood. His sentiments towards Desdemona amount to a sort of religion; no impure thought or image is allowed to mingle in his contemplation of her; the reverent admiration, the purity and warmth of enthusiasm, with which he thinks and speaks of her, are all but angelic: in brief, his whole mind stands dressed towards her in the very ideal of human respect. I must quote a short passage by way of showing how choicely she has inspired him, and how his manliness blooms into poetry when she is his theme. The matter occurs at the time of her landing in Cyprus, whither Cassio had gone before:

> *Mont.* But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?
> *Cas.* Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
> That paragons description and wild fame;
> One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
> And in th' essential vesture of creation
> Does tire the ingener. — How now! who has put in?
> *Gent.* 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.
> *Cas.* He's had most favourable and happy speed:
> Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
> The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,
> As having sense of beauty, do omit

Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.
Mont. Who is she?
Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts,
A se'nnight's speed. — Great God, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with Thine own powerful breath;
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort! — O, behold,
The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees. —
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of Heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

Coleridge justly notes it as an exquisite circumstance, that while Cassio, in his modest awe of the heroine's purity, thus gives her his knee, he makes no scruple of giving his lips to Emilia; though he does it in the presence of her husband, at the same time politely craving his allowance of the freedom. The truth is, he so much honours Desdemona, that he can scarce help kissing some one of her sex. In fine, the state of his mind towards Desdemona is such, that he feels safer and happier to live in the same town with her; to walk the same streets that she walks in; to kneel in the same church where she is kneeling; and the sense of having her for his friend puts peace into his pillow, and truth into his breast, makes the night calmer, the day cheerfuller, the air softer and balmier about him. On the other hand, he is to her "valiant Cassio," and "thrice-gentle Cassio"; terms of address in which she but indicates a delicate and honourable regard of his manly virtues.

Characteristics of the Moor.

It has been the custom to regard Othello as specially illustrating the effects of jealousy. What force this passion has with him, may be a question; but I am sure he has no special predisposition to it, and that in his case it does not grow in such a way, nor from such causes, as to be properly characteristic of him; though such has been the view more commonly held. On this point there has been a strange ignoring of the inscrutable practices in which his passion originates. Instead of taking its grounds of judgment directly from the man himself, criticism has trusted too much in what is said of him by other persons of the drama; to whom he must perforce seem jealous, because they know nothing of the devilish cunning that has been at work upon him. And the common opinion has been a good deal furthered by the stage; Iago's villainy being made so open and barefaced, that the Moor must have been grossly jealous, or grossly stupid, not to see through him: whereas, in fact, so subtle is the villain's craft, so close and involved are his designs, that Othello deserves the more respect for being taken in by him.

Coleridge is very bold and clear in the Moor's defence. "Othello," says he, "does not kill Desdemona in jealousy, but in a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago; such a conviction as any man would and must have entertained, who had believed Iago's honesty as Othello did. We, the audience, know that Iago is a villain from the beginning; but, in considering the essence of the Shakespearian Othello, we must perseveringly place ourselves in his situation, and under his circumstances. Then we shall immediately feel the fundamental difference

between the solemn agony of the noble Moor and the wretched fishing jealousy of Leontes." And the account given of jealousy in this play would seem to acquit the Moor of having acted from that passion. Iago rightly describes it as "a monster that doth make the meat it feeds on." And Emilia speaks to the same sense, when Desdemona pleads that she never gave her husband cause of jealousy:

> But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
> They are not ever jealous for the cause,
> But jealous for they're jealous.

A passion thus self-generated and self-nourished ought not to be confounded with a state of mind superinduced, like Othello's, by forgery of external proofs; a forgery wherein himself has no share but as the victim. He discovers no peculiar aptitude for such a passion: it is rather against the grain of his nature. Iago evidently knows this; knows that the Moor must see before he'll doubt; that when he doubts he'll prove; and that, when he has proved, he will retain his honour at all events, and retain his love, if it be compatible with honour. Accordingly he pointedly warns the Moor to beware of jealousy, lest, from fear of being jealous, he should intrench himself in the opposite extreme, so as to be proof against conviction.

The struggle, then, in Othello is not between love and jealousy, but between love and honour. And Iago's proceedings are exactly adapted to bring these two latter passions into collision. It is indeed the Moor's freedom from a jealous temper that enables the villain to get the mastery of him. Such a nature as his, so open, so generous, so confiding, is just the one to be taken in Iago's strong toils: to have escaped them would have argued him a partaker of the

strategy under which he falls. It is both the law and the impulse of a high and delicate honour to rely on another's word, unless we have proof to the contrary; to presume that things and persons are what they seem; and it is an attainture of ourselves to suspect falsehood in one who bears a character for truth. Such is precisely the Moor's condition in respect of Iago; a man whom he has long known, and never caught in a lie; whom he has often trusted, and never seen cause to regret it. So that in our judgment of Othello we ought to proceed very much as if his wife were indeed guilty of what she is charged with: for, were she ever so guilty, he could scarce have stronger proof than he has; and surely it is no sin in him that the evidence owes all its force to the plotting and lying of another.

Nevertheless I am far from upholding that the Moor does not in any stage of the proceedings show signs of jealousy. For the elements of this passion exist in the clearest and healthiest minds, and may be kindled into a transient sway over them; and all I mean to affirm is, that jealousy is not the leading feature of Othello's character, much less his character itself. It is indeed certain that he doubts before he has proof; but then it is also certain that he does not act upon his doubt, till proof has turned it into conviction. As to the rest, it seems to me there can be no dispute about the thing, but only about the term; some understanding by *jealousy* one thing, and some another. I presume no one would have spoken of Othello as acting from jealousy, had the charge been really true: in that case, his course would have been regarded as the result of conviction upon evidence; which is, to my mind, nearly decisive of the question.

Accordingly in the killing of Desdemona we have the proper marks of a judicial as distinguished from a revengeful

act. The Moor goes about her death calmly and religiously, as a duty from which he would gladly escape by his own death, if he could; and we feel that his heart is wrung with inexpressible anguish, though his hand is firm. It is a part of his heroism, that as he prefers her to himself, so he prefers honour to her; and he manifestly contemplates her death as a sacrifice due to the religion which he believes her to have mocked and profaned.

Othello not a Negro.

The general custom of the stage has been to represent Othello as a full-blooded Negro; and criticism has been a good deal exercised of late on the question whether Shakespeare meant him for such. The only expression that would fairly infer him to be a Negro is Roderigo's *thick-lips*. But Roderigo there speaks as a disappointed lover, seeking to revenge himself on the cause of his disappointment. Coxcombs, like him, when balked and mortified in rivalry with their betters, naturally fly off into extravagant terms of disparagement and reproach; their petulant vanity easing and soothing itself by calling them any thing they may wish them to be. It is true, the Moor is several times spoken of as *black;* but this term was often used, as it still is, of a tawny skin in comparison with one that was fair. The Poet has divers instances of this in his other plays. In fact, the calling a dark-skinned white person black is among the commonest forms of speech in the language.

It would seem, from Othello's being so often termed "the Moor," that there ought to be no question as to what the Poet meant him to be. For the difference of Moors and Negroes was as well known in his time as it is now; and

that he thought them the same is no more likely from this play than from *The Merchant of Venice*, where the Prince of Morocco comes as a suitor to Portia, and in a stage-direction of the old quarto is called "a *tawny* Moor." Othello was a Mauritanian prince. That he was a prince we learn from himself; that he was a Mauritanian we learn from Iago, who in one place speaks of his purposed retirement to Mauritania as his home. Consistently with this the same speaker elsewhere uses terms implying him to be a native of Barbary; Mauritania being an old name of one of the Barbary States. Iago, to be sure, is an unscrupulous liar; but he is too shrewd to lie when the truth will serve his purpose equally well, as it will in this case. With the Negroes, moreover, the Venetians had nothing to do; but they had much intercourse with the Moors, who were a civilized, warlike, enterprising race, such as might well furnish an Othello.

His Enthusiastic Heroism.

The Moor's character, direct and single in itself, is worked out with great breadth and clearness. In the opening scene we have Iago telling sundry lies about him; yet the lying is so managed as, while effecting its immediate purpose on the gull, to be at the same time more or less suggestive of the truth: he caricatures Othello, but is too artful a caricaturist to let the peculiar features of the subject be lost; that is, there is truth enough in what he says to make it pass with one who wishes it true, and is weak enough to let the wish shape his belief.

Othello's mind is strongly charged with the enthusiasm of high principle and earnest feeling; which gives a certain elevated and imaginative turn to his speech. In the de

portment of such a man there is apt to be something on which a cold and crafty malice can easily stick the imputation of being haughty and grandiloquent. Especially, when urged with unseasonable or impertinent solicitations, his answers are apt to be in such a style, that they can hardly pass through an Iagoish mind without catching the air of strutting and bombastic evasion. For a man like Othello will not stoop to be the advocate or apologist of himself it is enough that he stands approved to his own sense of right; and to explain his conduct, save where he is responsible, looks like soliciting an indorsement from others, as though the conscience of rectitude were not enough to sustain him. Such a man is apt to succeed; for by his strength of character he naturally creates a sphere which himself alone can fill, and so makes himself necessary. On the other hand, a subtle and malignant rogue, like Iago, while fearing to be known as the foe of such a man, envies his success, and from this envy affects contempt of his qualities. For the proper triumph of a bad man over his envied superiors is to scoff at the very gifts that inwardly gnaw him.

The hints, then, derived from Iago plant in us a certain forecast of the Moor, as one who deliberates calmly, and therefore decides firmly. His refusing to explain where he is not responsible, is a pledge that he will not shrink from any responsibility where he truly owes it. At our first meeting with him, these anticipations are made good. Brabantio, on learning what has happened, rallies up some officers, and goes with them in pursuit of the Moor: Iago sees them coming, and urges him to elude their search:

> *Iago.* These are the raisèd father and his friends:
> You were best go in.
> *Othel.* Not I; I must be found:

> My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
> Shall manifest me rightly.

Here we see that, as he acts from honour and principle, so he will cheerfully abide the consequences. Full of equanimity and firmness, he is content to let the reasons of his course appear in the issues thereof.

From his characteristic intrepidity and calmness, the Moor, as we learn in the sequel, has come to be esteemed, by those who know him best, as one "whom passion cannot shake." For the passions are in him both tempered and strengthened by the energy of higher principles; and, if kept under reason, the stronger they are, the more they exalt reason. This feature of Othello is well shown when the fore-mentioned pursuers come upon him, and Brabantio exclaims, "Down with him, thief!" Both sides draw and make ready to fight, and the Moor quiets them:

> Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.—
> Good Signior, you shall more command with years
> Than with your weapons.

Here the belligerent spirit is as much charmed down by his playful logic as overawed by his sternness of command. The very rhythm in which he speaks the order has, to my taste, a spice of good-humoured irony in it. And throughout the scene he appears

> the noble nature whose solid virtue
> The shot of accident nor dart of chance
> Could neither graze nor pierce:

his intrepid calmness, his bland modesty, his manly frankness, and considerative firmness, are all displayed to great advantage, marking his character as one made up of the most solid and gentle qualities. Though he has nowise

wronged Brabantio, he knows that he seems to have done so: his feelings therefore take the old man's part, and he respects his age and sorrow too much to resent his abuse.

Such is our sturdy warrior's habitual carriage: no upstart exigency disconcerts him, no obloquy exasperates him to violence or recrimination: peril, perplexity, provocation, rather augment than impair his self-possession; and the more deeply he is stirred, the more calmly and steadily he acts. This "calmness of intensity," as some one calls it, has perhaps its finest issue in his address to the Senate, where the words, though they fall on the ear as softly as an evening breeze, seem charged with life from every part of his being. All is grace and modesty and gentleness; yet what strength and dignity! the union of perfect repose and impassioned energy.

And here I am reminded of a deeply-significant point of contrast between the Moor and Iago, which ought not to be left unmarked. Iago is morbidly introversive and self-explicative; his mind is evermore spinning out its own contents; and he takes no pleasure in showing things, or even in seeing them, till he has first baptized them in his own spirit, and then seems chuckling inwardly as he holds them up reeking with the slime he has dipped them in. In Othello, on the contrary, every thing is direct, healthy, objective; and he reproduces in transparent diction the truth as revealed to him from without, his mind being like a clear, even mirror, which, invisible itself, gives back the exact shape and colour of whatever stands before it.

Othello's Courtship.

I know of nothing in Shakespeare that has this quality more conspicuous than the Moor's account "how I did thrive in this fair lady's love, and she in mine":

Her father loved me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it.
This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse. Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively: I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, *In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;*
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it; yet she wish'd
That Heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me;
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I loved her, that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.

Here the dark man eloquent literally speaks pictures. We see the silent blushing maiden moving about her household tasks, ever and anon turning her eye upon the earnest warrior; leaving the door open as she goes out of the room, that she may catch the tones of his voice; hastening back to her father's side, as though drawn to the spot by some new impulse of filial attachment; afraid to look the

speaker in the face, yet unable to keep out of his presence, and drinking in with ear and heart every word of his marvellous tale: the Moor meanwhile waxing more eloquent when this modest listener was by, partly because he saw she was interested, and partly because he wished to interest her still more. Yet we believe all he says, for the virtual presence of the things he describes enables us, as it were, to test the fidelity of his representation.

In his simplicity, however, the Moor lets out a truth of which he seems not to have been aware. At Brabantio's fireside he has been unwittingly making love by his manner, before he was even conscious of loving; and thought he was but listening for a disclosure of the lady's feelings, while he was really soliciting a response to his own: for love is a matter wherein heart often calls and answers to heart without giving the head any notice of its proceedings. His quick perception of the interest he had awakened is a confession of the interest he felt, the state of his mind coming out in his anxiety to know that of hers. And how natural it was that he should thus honestly think he was but returning her passion, while it was indeed his own passion that caused him to see or suspect she had any to be returned! And so she seems to have understood the matter; whereupon, appreciating the modesty that kept him silent, she gave him a hint of encouragement to speak. In his feelings, moreover, respect keeps pace with affection; and he involuntarily seeks some tacit assurance of a return of his passion as a sort of permission to cherish and confess it. It is this feeling that originates the delicate, reverential courtesy, the ardent, yet distant, and therefore beautiful, regards, with which a truly honourable mind instinctively attires itself towards its best object; a feeling that throws a majestic

grace around the most unpromising figure, and endows the plainest features with something more eloquent than beauty.

Before passing on from this part of the theme, it may be well to note one item of the forecited speech. Othello says of the lady, "She wish'd that Heaven had made her such a man." A question has lately been raised whether the meaning here is, that she wished such a man had been made *for* her, or that she herself had been made such a man; and several have insisted on the latter, lest her delicacy should be impeached. Her delicacy, I hope, stands in need of no such critical attorneyship. Othello was indeed just such a man as Desdemona wanted; and her letting him understand this, was doubtless a part of the *hint* whereon he spoke. She is too modest to be prudish.

Desdemona.

The often-alleged unfitness of Othello's match has been mainly disposed of by what I have already said touching his origin. The rest of it, if there be any, may be safely left to the fact of his being honoured by the Venetian Senate, and a cherished guest at Brabantio's fireside. At all events, I cannot help thinking that the noble Moor and his sweet lady have the very sort of resemblance which people thus united ought to have; and their likeness seems all the better for being joined with so much of unlikeness. It is the chaste, beautiful wedlock of meekness and magnanimity, where the inward correspondence stands the more approved for the outward diversity; and reminds us of what we are too apt to forget, that the stout, valiant soul is the chosen home of reverence and tenderness. Our heroic warrior's dark, rough exterior is found to enclose a heart

strong as a giant's, yet soft and sweet as infancy. Such a marriage of bravery and gentleness proclaims that beauty is an overmatch for strength, and that true delicacy is among the highest forms of power.

Equally beautiful is the fact, that Desdemona has the heart to recognize the proper complement of herself beneath such an unattractive appearance. Perhaps none but so pure and gentle a being could have discerned the real gentleness of Othello through so many obscurations. To her fine sense, that tale of wild adventures and mischances which often did beguile her of her tears, — a tale wherein another might have seen but the marks of a rude, coarse, animal strength, — disclosed the history of a most meek, brave, manly soul. Nobly blind to whatever is repulsive in his manhood's vesture, her thoughts are filled with "his honours and his valiant parts"; she "sees Othello's visage in his mind"; his ungracious aspect is lost to her in his graces of character; and the shrine that were else so unattractive to look upon is made beautiful by the life with which her chaste eye sees it irradiated.

In herself Desdemona is not more interesting than several of the Poet's women; but perhaps none of the others is in a condition so proper for developing the innermost springs of pathos. In her character and sufferings there is a nameless something that haunts the reader's mind, and hangs like a spell of compassionate sorrow upon the beatings of his heart: his thoughts revert to her and linger about her, as under a mysterious fascination of pity which they cannot shake off, and which is only kept from being painful by the sacred charm of beauty and eloquence that blends with the feeling while kindling it. It is remarkable that the sympathies are not so deeply moved in the scene of her death as in that where by the blows of her husband's tongue and

hand she is made to feel that she has indeed lost him. Too innocent to suspect that she is suspected, she cannot for a long time understand or imagine the motives of his harshness; and her errings in quest of excuses and apologies for him are deeply pathetic, inasmuch as they manifestly spring from her incapability of an impure thought. And the sense that the heart of his confidence is gone from her, and for what cause it is gone, comes upon her like a dead stifling weight of agony and woe, which benumbs her to all other pains. She does not show any thing that can be properly called pangs of suffering; the effect is too deep for that; the blow falling so heavy, that it stuns her sensibilities into a sort of lethargy.

Desdemona's character may almost be said to consist in the union of purity and impressibility. All her organs of sense and motion seem perfectly ensouled, and her visible form instinct in every part with the spirit and intelligence of moral life:

> We understood
> Her by her sight; her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might almost say her body thought.

It is through this most delicate impressibility that she sometimes gets frightened out of her proper character; as in her equivocation about the handkerchief, and her childlike pleading for life in the last scene; where her perfect candour and resignation are overmastered by sudden impressions of terror.

But, with all her openness to influences from without, she is still susceptive only of the good. No element of impurity can insinuate itself. Her nature seems wrought about with some subtile texture of moral sympathies and antipathies, which selects, as by instinct, whatsoever is pure, with

out taking any thought or touch of the evil mixed with it. Even Iago's moral oil-of-vitrol cannot eat a passage into her mind: from his envenomed wit she extracts the element of harmless mirth, without receiving or suspecting the venom with which it is charged. Thus the world's contagions pass before her, yet dare not touch nor come near her, because she has nothing to sympathize with them, or to own their acquaintance. And so her life is like a quiet stream

> In whose calm depth the beautiful and pure
> Alone are mirror'd; which, though shapes of ill
> Do hover round its surface, glides in light,
> And takes no shadow from them.

Desdemona's heroism, I fear, is not of the kind to take very well with such an age of individual self-ensconcement as the present. Though of a "high and plenteous wit and invention," this element never makes any special report of itself; that is, she has mind enough, but very little of mental demonstrativeness. Like Cordelia, all the parts of her being speak in such harmony, that the intellectual tones may not be distinctly heard. Besides, her mind and character were formed under that old-fashioned way of thinking which, regarding man and wife as socially one, legislated *round* them, not *between* them; as meaning that the wife should seek protection *in* her husband, instead of resorting to legal methods for protection *against* him. Affection does indeed fill her with courage and energy of purpose: she is heroic to link her life with the man she loves; heroic to do and to suffer with him and for him, after she is his; but, poor gentle soul! she knows no heroism that can prompt her, in respect of him, to cast aside the awful prerogative of defencelessness: that she has lost him, is what hurts her; and this is a hurt that cannot be salved with anger or resent-

ment: so that her only strength is to be meek, uncomplaining, submissive, in the worst that his hand may execute.

> Mightier far
> Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
> Of magic potent over Sun and star,
> Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
> And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

Swayed by this power, our heroine is of course "a child to chiding," and sinks beneath her husband's unkindness, instead of having the spirit to outface it.

They err greatly who think to school Desdemona in the doctrine of woman's rights. When her husband has been shaken from his confidence in her truth and loyalty, what can she care for her rights as a woman? To be under the necessity of asserting them is to have lost, and more than lost them. A constrained abstinence from evil deeds and unkind words bears no price with her; and to be sheltered from the wind and storm is worse than nothing to her, unless she have a living fountain of light and warmth in the being that shelters her. But indeed the beauty of the woman is so hid in the affection and obedience of the wife, that it almost seems a profanation to praise it. As brave to suffer wrong as she is fearful to do it, there is a holiness in her mute resignation, which ought, perhaps, to be kept, where the Poet has left it, veiled from the eyes of all save those whom a severe discipline of humanity may have qualified for duly respecting it. At all events, whoever would get at her secret, let him study her as a pupil, not as a critic; and, until his inmost heart speak her approval in regard of all her behaviour towards the Moor, let him rest assured that he is not competent to judge her; and that he has much to learn, before he will be worthy to speak of her. But if he have

the gift to see that her whole course in this behalf, from the hour of her marriage to the last groan of the ever-loving, ever-obedient, broken-hearted wife, is replete with the beauty and grace and honour of womanhood; then let him weep, weep, weep for her; so may he depart "a sadder and a wiser man!" As for her unresisting submissiveness, let no man dare to defend it! Assuredly we shall do her a great wrong, and ourselves a greater wrong, if we suppose, for a moment, that she would not rather die by her husband's hand than owe her life to any protection against him. What, indeed, were life, what could it be, to her, since suspicion has fallen on her innocency? That her husband could not, would not, *dare* not, wrong her, even because she had trusted in him, and because in her sacred defencelessness she could not resist nor resent the wrong, — this is the only protection from which she would not pray on her bended knees to be delivered!

Coleridge justly remarks upon the art shown in Iago, that the character, with all its inscrutable depravity, neither revolts nor seduces the mind: the interest of his part amounts almost to fascination, yet there is not the slightest moral taint or infection about it. Hardly less wonderful is the Poet's skill in carrying the Moor through such a course of undeserved infliction, without any loosening of his hold on our sympathy and respect. Deep and intense as is the feeling that goes along with the heroine, Othello fairly divides it with her: rather the virtues and sufferings of each are so managed as to heighten the interest of the other. The impression still waits upon the Moor, that he does "nought in hate, but all in honour." Nor is the mischief made to work through any vice or weakness perceived or felt in him, but

rather through such qualities as lift him higher in our regard. Under the conviction that she in whom he had set his faith and garnered up his heart; that she in whom he had looked to find how much more blessed it is to give than to receive, has desecrated all his gifts, and turned his very religion into sacrilege; — under this conviction, all the grace, the poetry, the consecration, of life is gone; his whole being, with its freight of hopes, memories, affections, is reduced to an utter wreck; a last farewell to whatsoever has made life attractive, the conditions, motives, prospects, of noble achievement, is all there is left him: in brief, he feels literally unmade, robbed not only of the laurels he has won, but of the spirit that manned him to the winning of them; so that he can neither live nobly nor nobly die, but is doomed to a sort of living death, an object of scorn and loathing unto himself. In this state of mind, no wonder his thoughts reel and totter, and cling convulsively to his honour, which is the only thing that now remains to him, until in his effort to rescue this he loses all, and has no refuge but in self-destruction. He approaches the dreadful task in the bitterness as well as calmness of despair. In sacrificing his love to save his honour he really performs the most heroic self-sacrifice; for the taking of Desdemona's life is to him far worse than to lose his own. Nor could he have loved her so much, had he not loved honour more. Her love for him, too, is based on the selfsame principle which now prompts and nerves him to the sacrifice. And as at last our pity for her rises into awe, so our awe of him melts into pity; the catastrophe thus blending their several virtues and sufferings into one most profound, solemn, sweetly-mournful impression. Well may we ask, with Coleridge, "as the curtain drops, which do we pity most?"

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

The DUKE OF VENICE.
BRABANTIO, a Senator.
Two other Senators.
GRATIANO, Brother to Brabantio.
LODOVICO, Kinsman to Brabantio.
OTHELLO, a noble Moor.
CASSIO, his Lieutenant.
IAGO, his Ancient.
RODERIGO, a Venetian Gentleman.
MONTANO, Governor of Cyprus.
A Clown, Servant to Othello.
A Herald.

DESDEMONA, Othello's Wife, Daughter to Brabantio.
EMILIA, Wife to Iago.
BIANCA, Mistress to Cassio.

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, Attendants, &c.

SCENE. — *For the First Act, in Venice; during the rest of the Play, at a Seaport in Cyprus.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO *and* IAGO.

Rod. Tush, never tell me; I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.[1]

[1] The intended elopement. Roderigo has been suing for Desdemona's hand, employing Iago to aid him in his suit, and paying his service in advance. The play opens pat upon her elopement with the Moor, and Roderigo presumes Iago to have been in the secret of their intention.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me!
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Oft capp'd to him;[2] and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I'm worth no worse a place:
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance[3]
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
And, in conclusion, nonsuits my mediators;
For, *Certes*, says he, *I've already chose*
My officer. And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wight;[4]

[2] It appears that to *cap* was used for a salutation of respect, made by taking off the cap. So explained by Coles in his *Dictionary:* "To cap a person, *coram aliquo caput aperire, nudare;* to uncover the head before any one." And Shakespeare uses *half-cap* for a cold or a slight salutation. So in *Timon of Athens*, ii. 2: "With certain *half-caps* and cold-moving nods they froze me into silence."

[3] A *bombastic circumlocution;* or a speech strutting through a circumstantial detail with big words and sounding phrases.

[4] *In* is here equivalent to *on account of.* See *Macbeth*, page 99, note 7. — *Wight* was applied indifferently to persons of either sex; often with a dash of humour or satire. Iago seems to be rather fond of the term: he has it again in ii. 1: "She was a *wight*, if ever such wight were," &c. In the text, he probably alludes to Cassio's amorous intrigue with Bianca, which comes out so prominent in the course of the play. — Cassio is sneeringly called "a great arithmetician" and a "counter-caster," in allusion to the pursuits for which the Florentines were distinguished. The point is thus stated by Charles Armitage Browne: "A soldier from Florence, famous for its

That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle[5] knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
Wherein the togèd consuls can propose
As masterly as he:[6] mere prattle, without practice,
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had th' election:
And I — of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
Christian and heathen — must be be-leè'd and calm'd
By debitor-and-creditor:[7] this counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I — God bless the mark! — his Moorship's ancient.[8]

Rod. By Heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago. Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service,

bankers throughout Europe, and for its invention of bills of exchange, book-keeping, and every thing connected with a counting-house, might well be ridiculed for his promotion by an Iago in this manner."

[5] The arrangement, ordering, or marshalling of troops for a battle.

[6] *Theoric* for *theory;* what may be learned from books. See *Henry V.*, page 41, note 7. — "The *togèd* consuls" are the civil governors; so called by Iago in opposition to the *warlike* qualifications of which he has been speaking. There may be an allusion to the adage, "Cedant arma togæ." — *Propose*, probably, in the sense of *prate* or *propound*. See *Much Ado*, page 66, note 1.

[7] By a mere accountant, a keeper of debt and credit. Iago means that Cassio, though knowing no more of war than men of the gown, as distinguished from men of the sword, has yet *outsailed* him in military advancement. In nautical language, being *be-lee'd* by another is the opposite of having the *windward* of him; which latter is a position of great advantage. — Again, he calls Cassio "this *counter-caster*," in allusion to the *counters* formerly used in reckoning up accounts.

[8] *Ancient* is an old corruption of *ensign;* used both for the flag and for the bearer of it. See *1 Henry IV.*, p. 157, n. 8. — "God bless the mark" is an old phrase of prayer or deprecation, meaning May God *avert*, or *invert the omen;* used with reference to any thing that was regarded as a *bad sign* or *token*. See *Romeo and Juliet*, page 105, note 10.

Preferment goes by letter and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to th' first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,
Whether I in any just term am affined[9]
To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him, then.

Iago. O, sir, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender; and, when he's old, cashier'd:
Whip me such honest knaves.[10] Others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Well thrive by them, and, when they've lined their coats,
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;
And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:[11]

[9] Whether I stand *within* any such *terms of affinity* or *relationship* to the Moor, as that I am bound to love him.

[10] *Knave* is here used for *servant*, but with a sly mixture of contempt. The usage was very common.

[11] An instance, perhaps, of *would* for *should;* and, if so, the meaning may be, "Were I in the Moor's place, I should be quite another man than I am." Or, "if I had the Moor's nature, if I were such an honest dunce as he is, I should be just a fit subject for men that 'have some soul' to practise upon." Perhaps Iago is purposely mixing some obscurity in his talk in order to mystify the gull.

In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
For, when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In complement extern,[12] 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.[13]

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
If he can carry't thus![14]

Iago. Call up her father,
Rouse him. Make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen:
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies; though that his joy be joy,

[12] "Complement extern" is external completeness or accomplishment. Iago scorns to have his inward and his outward keep touch together, as being the next thing to wearing himself wrong side out. The sense of the whole passage is, "When I shall become such a fool as to make my external behaviour a true index of my inward thought and purpose, I shall soon proceed to the further folly of putting my heart on the outside for other fools to sport with." In illustration of the text, Walker aptly quotes the following from Tourneur's *Revenger's Tragedy:*

> The old duke,
> Thinking my outward shape and inward heart
> Are cut out of one piece, (for he that prates his secrets,
> His heart stands o' th' outside,) hires me by price.

[13] Iago probably means "I am not what I *seem;* but to speak thus would not smack so much of the peculiar dialect with which he loves to practise on the dupe.

[14] How fortunate he is, or how strong in fortune, if he can hold out against such practice. Similar language occurs in *Cymbeline:* "Our pleasure his *full fortune* doth confine." And in *Antony and Cleopatra:* "The imperious show of the *full-fortuned* Cæsar." — Of course *owe* is used in the old sense of *own* or *possess.*

Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
As it may lose some colour.

Rod. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do; with like timorous accent and dire yell
As when, by night and negligence,[15] the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago. Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves! thieves!
Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO *appears above, at a window.*

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What is the matter there?

Rod. Signior, is all your family within?

Iago. Are your doors lock'd?

Bra. Why, wherefore ask you this?

Iago. Zounds, sir, you're robb'd! for shame, put on your gown!
Your heart is burst,[16] you have lost half your soul:
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the Devil[17] will make a grandsire of you.
Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits?

[15] That is, *in the time of* night and negligence; a very common form of expression.—*Timorous* was sometimes used, as *fearful* still is, for that which *frightens*. Old dictionaries explain it "fearful, horridus, formidolosus."

[16] *Burst* is here used in the sense of *broken*. The usage was common.

[17] Alluding to the imputed colour of the Devil, who was always represented as *black;* and implying that Othello is of the same stock and complexion. See *The Merchant*, page 95, note 27.

Rod. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?
Bra. Not I: what are you?
Rod. My name is Roderigo.
Bra. The worser welcome:
I've charged thee not to haunt about my doors:
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,[18]
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet: —
Rod. Sir, sir, sir, —
Bra. — but thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.
Rod. Patience, good sir.
Bra. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange.[19]
Rod. Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.
Iago. Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God, if the Devil bid you.
Bra. Thou art a villain.
Iago. You are — a Senator.
Bra. This thou shalt answer: I know thee, Roderigo.
Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you,
If't be your pleasure and most wise consent,
As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,

[18] "*Distempering* draughts" is *intoxicating* potations.—*Bravery*, here, is *bravado, insolence, defiance.*

[19] "Mine is not a *lone house*, where a robbery might easily be committed." *Grange* is, strictly, the farm of a monastery; but, provincially, any lone house or solitary farm is called a *grange*.

At this odd-even [20] and dull watch o' the night,
Transported, with no worse nor better guard
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,[21]
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor, —
If this be known to you, and your allowance,
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;
But, if you know not this, my manners tell me
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe
That, from [22] the sense of all civility,
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.
Your daughter, — if you have not given her leave, —
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
In an extravagant and wheeling [23] stranger
Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself:
If she be in her chamber or your house,
Let loose on me the justice of the State
For thus deluding you.

Bra. Strike on the tinder, ho!
Give me a taper! — call up all my people! —
This accident is not unlike my dream: [24]

[20] *This odd-even* appears to mean the interval between *twelve* at night and *one* in the morning.

[21] A writer in the Pictorial Shakespeare tells us, "that the gondoliers are the only conveyers of persons, and of a large proportion of property, in Venice; that they are thus cognizant of all intrigues, and the fittest agents in them, and are under perpetual and strong temptation to make profit of the secrets of society. Brabantio might well be in horror at his daughter having, in 'the dull watch o' the night, no worse nor better guard.'"

[22] *From* here has the force of *against* or *contrary to*. Repeatedly so.

[23] *Wheeling* is *roving* or *running about*. *Extravagant* in the Latin sense of *straying* or *wandering*. So Sir Henry Wotton has the phrase "not altogether *extravagant* from my purpose." See, also, *Hamlet*, page 54, note 42. — *In* for *on* or *upon*; the two being often used indiscriminately.

[24] The careful old Senator, being caught careless, transfers his caution to his dreaming-power at least. — COLERIDGE.

Belief of it oppresses me already. —
Light, I say! light! [*Exit above*
Iago. Farewell; for I must leave you:
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced — as, if I stay, I shall —
Against the Moor: for, I do know, the State —
However this may gall him with some check —
Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embark'd
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom [25] they have none
To lead their business: in which regard,[26]
Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,
Yet, for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,
Lead to the Sagittary [27] the raisèd search;
And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [*Exit.*

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, *and* Servants *with torches.*

Bra. It is too true an evil: gone she is;
And what's to come of my despisèd time [28]
Is nought but bitterness. — Now, Roderigo,

[25] *Fathom*, here, is *measure;* that is, *depth, reach*, or *capacity.*

[26] "*In* which *regard*" here means the same as *on* which *account.*

[27] Considerable question has been made as to the place meant by *Sagittary.* Probably it was some inn or hotel that had, for its sign, a picture of the old zodiacal sign, *Sagittarius.* Inns were commonly named from the animals or other things thus depicted on their signs; and Shakespeare has many instances of such naming. It is not unlikely that the Poet had himself known a Venetian inn called "The Sagittary."

[28] *Despised time* is here a proleptical form of speech; that is, Brabantio *anticipates* contempt during the rest of his *life*, in consequence of what his daughter has done.

Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!
With the Moor, say'st thou? Who would be a father!
How didst thou know 'twas she? O, she deceives me
Past thought! What said she to you? — Get more tapers;
Raise all my kindred. — Are they married, think you?

Rod. Truly, I think they are.

Bra. O Heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood! —

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act. — Is there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused?[29] Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir, I have indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother. — O, would you had had her! —
Some one way, some another. — Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think I can discover him, if you please
To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
I may command at most.[30] — Get weapons, ho!
And raise some special officers of night. —
On, good Roderigo; I'll deserve your pains. [*Exeunt*

[29] *Abused* is *cheated, deluded, made game of.* Often so.
[30] "I may command at most *of the houses.*"

SCENE II. — *The Same. Another Street.*

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, *and* Attendants *with torches.*

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men.
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience [1]
To do no cóntrived murder: I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought t' have yerk'd [2] him here under the ribs.

Oth. 'Tis better as it is.

Iago. Nay, but he prated,
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your Honour,[3]
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,
Are you fast married? Be assured of this,
That the magnifico [4] is much beloved;
And hath, in his effect, a voice potential,
As double as the Duke's: [5] he will divorce you;
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law — with all his might t' enforce it on —
Will give him cable.

[1] As we should say, a *point* or a *matter* of conscience.

[2] To *yerk* is the same as to *jerk;* to strike with a quick smart blow. In *King Henry V.*, iv. 7, we have it used of horses kicking: "The wounded steeds *yerk* out their armèd heels."

[3] Iago is speaking of Roderigo, and pretending to relate what he has done and said against Othello.

[4] *Magnifico* is an old title given to the grandees or chief men of Venice.

[5] He hath a voice potential, or powerful, *as much so as* the Duke's, is the meaning. The Poet often uses *single* for *weak* or *feeble;* and here, for once, he has *double* in the opposite sense. The Duke or *Doge* of Venice was a magistrate of great power, every court and council of the State being very much under his control.

Oth. Let him do his spite:
My services which I have done the signiory
Shall[6] out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,—
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate, — I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege;[7] and my demerits
May speak, unbonneted,[8] to as proud a fortune
As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
I would not my unhousèd[9] free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the sea's worth.[10] But, look! what lights come yond?

Iago. Those are the raisèd father and his friends:
You were best go in.

Oth. Not I; I must be found:
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Enter CASSIO, *and certain* Officers *with torches.*

Oth. The servants of the Duke, and my lieutenant.—
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
What is the news?

[6] Here our present idiom would require *will*. I have repeatedly noted that in the Poet's time *shall* and *will* were often used interchangeably.

[7] Men who have sat on kingly *thrones*. *Siege* for *seat* was common.

[8] *Merit* and *demerit* were often used synonymously. So in Latin *mereo* and *demereo* have the same meaning. *Unbonneted* is *without taking off the hat*. To *bonnet*, like to *cap*, is to take off the cap in token of respect. See page 48, note 2.

[9] *Unhousèd* is *unsettled*, without a *home* or *domestic ties*.

[10] Pliny, the naturalist, has a chapter on *the riches of the sea*. The expression seems to have been proverbial. See, also, Clarence's account of his dream, in *King Richard the Third*, i. 4.

Cas. The Duke does greet you, general;
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,
Even on the instant.
Oth. What is the matter, think you?
Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.
It is a business of some heat: the galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls,[11] raised and met,
Are at the Duke's already: you had been hotly call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The Senate sent about three several quests
To search you out.
Oth. 'Tis well I'm found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you. [*Exit*
Cas. Ancient, what makes he here?[12]
Iago. Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack:[13]
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.
Cas. I do not understand.
Iago. He's married.
Cas. To who?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to — Come, captain, will you go?
Oth. Have with you.
Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

[11] *Consuls* means the same here as the "togèd consuls," or men of the gown, mentioned in note 6 of the preceding scene; that is, the *Senators*.

[12] What is he *about*, or what is he *doing* here? Shakespeare so uses the phrase repeatedly.

[13] A *carack* or *carrick*, was a ship of great burden, a Spanish galleon so named from *carico*, a lading, or freight.

Iago. It is Brabantio: general, be advised;
He comes to bad intent.

Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, *and* Officers *with torches and weapons.*

Oth. Holla! stand there!
Rod. Signior, it is the Moor.
Bra. Down with him, thief!
[*They draw on both sides.*
Iago. You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.
Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.[14] —
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.
Bra. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?
Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd
The wealthy curlèd[15] darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou, — to fear, not to delight.
Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense

[14] If I mistake not, there is a sort of playful, good-humoured irony expressed in the very rhythm of this line. The thing was remarked to me many years ago by the Hon. R. H. Dana, of Boston.

[15] In Shakespeare's time it was the fashion for lusty gallants to wear "a *curled* bush of frizzled hair." In *King Lear*, Edgar, when he was "proud in heart and mind," *curled his hair*. The Poet has other allusions to the custom among people of rank and fashion.

That thou hast practised on her with foul charms;
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
That waken motion: [16] I'll have't disputed on;
'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant. —
Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.

Oth. Hold your hands,
Both you of my inclining, and the rest!
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter. — Where will you that I go
To answer this your charge?

Bra. To prison; till fit time
Of law and course of direct session [17]
Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey?
How may the Duke be therewith satisfied,
Whose messengers are here about my side,
Upon some present business of the State
To bring me to him?

1 Off. 'Tis true, most worthy signior;
The Duke's in council, and your noble self,

[16] *Motion* is elsewhere used by the Poet in the same sense. So in *Measure for Measure:* "One who never feels the wanton stings and *motions* of the sense." And in a subsequent part of this scene: "But we have reason, to cool our raging *motions*, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts." To *waken* is to *incite*, to *stir up*. We have, in the present play, "*waken'd* wrath."

[17] The language is rather odd, and perhaps somewhat obscure; but the meaning probably is, till the time prescribed by law and by the regular course of judicial procedure. *Session* is not unfrequently used in this way and the proper meaning of *direct* is *straight onward*, or *according to rule*.

I'm sure, is sent for.

Bra. How! the Duke in council!
In this time of the night! — Bring him away;
Mine's not an idle cause: the Duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the State,
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;
For, if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves and pagans[18] shall our statesmen be. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III. — *The Same. A Council-chamber.*

The Duke *and* Senators *sitting at a table;* Officers *attending.*

Duke. There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.[1]

1 Sen. Indeed, they're disproportion'd;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2 Sen. And mine, two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account, —
As in these cases, where the aim reports,[2]
'Tis oft with difference, — yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment:

[18] *Pagan* was a word of contempt; and the reason will appear from its etymology: "*Paganus*, villanus vel incultus. Et derivatur a *pagus*, quod est villa. Et *quicunque habitat in villa est paganus*. Præteria quicunque est extra civitatem Dei, i.e., ecclesiam, dicitur paganus. Anglice, a *paynim*." — *Ortus Vocabulorum*, 1528.

[1] There is no *consistency*, no agreement, in these reports, to stamp them with credibility. *News* was used as singular or plural indifferently.

[2] The Poet elsewhere uses *aim* in the sense of *guess* or *conjecture*. So in *Julius Cæsar*: "What you would work me to, I have some *aim*."

I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

Sailor. [*Within.*] What, ho! what, ho! what, ho!

1 Off. A messenger from the galleys.

Enter a Sailor.

Duke. Now, what's the business?

Sail. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;
So was I bid report here to the State
By Signior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change?[3]

1 Sen. This cannot be,
By no assay of reason:[4] 'tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
Th' importancy of Cyprus to the Turk;
And let ourselves again but understand,
That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question bear it,[5]
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
But altogether lacks th' abilities
That Rhodes is dress'd in;—if we make thought of this,
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,
To wake and wage[6] a danger profitless.

[3] That is, *what* say you *of* this change? See *Macbeth*, page 117, note 24.

[4] By no *trial* or *test* of reason. *Assay* was often used thus.

[5] May *win* or *capture* it with an *easier contest.*—*Question* readily glides through *controversy* to *conflict* or *fight.*—*Brace*, next line, is *state of defence, strongly braced.* So, to *brace on* the armour was to *arm.*

[6] To *wage* is to *undertake.* "To *wage* law (in the common acceptation) seems to be to *follow* to *urge*, drive on, or prosecute the law or law-suits"

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

1 Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed [7] with an after fleet.

1 Sen. Ay, so I thought. — How many, as you guess?

Mess. Of thirty sail; and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus. —
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

1 Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us to him; post-post-haste dispatch.

1 Sen. Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

Enter Brabantio, Othello, Iago, Roderigo, *and* Officers.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.[8] —
[*To* Braban.] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

as to *wage* war is *prœliari, bellare*, to drive on the war, to fight in battels as warriors do." — Blount's *Glossography*.

[7] *Injointed* is the same here as *united*, and so used intransitively.

[8] It was part of the policy of the Venetian State to employ strangers, and even Moors, in their wars. "By lande they are served of straungers, both for generals, for capitaines, and for all other men of warre, because their lawe permitteth not any Venetian to be capitaine over an armie by lande; fearing, I thinke, Cæsar's example." — Thomas's *History of Italye*.

Bra. So did I yours. Good your Grace, pardon me:
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath raised me from my bed; nor doth the general care
Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! O, my daughter!

Duke and Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me
She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

Duke. Whoe'er he be that, in this foul proceeding,
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law[9]
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After your own sense; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

Bra. Humbly I thank your Grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state-affairs,
Hath hither brought.

Duke and Sen. We're very sorry for't.

Duke. [*To* OTHELLO.] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

[9] By the Venetian law the giving love-potions was highly criminal, as appears in the *Code Della Promission del Malefico*. And the use of *philters*, so called, for the purpose here supposed, was generally credited.

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;
For, since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round[10] unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magic, —
For such proceeding I am charged withal, —
I won his daughter with.

Bra. A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself;[11] and she — in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, every thing —
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect,

[10] *Round* was often used in the sense of *plain* or *downright*.

[11] *Herself* for *itself*, referring to *motion*. The personal and neutral pronouns were often used interchangeably. — *Motion* is here used in the same sense as remarked in note 16 of the preceding scene; meaning, as White says, "that Desdemona blushed when conscious of the natural passions of her sex."

That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning Hell,
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof:
Without more certain and more overt test,
These are thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming,[12] you prefer against him.

1 Sen. But, Othello, speak:
Did you by indirect and forcèd courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?

Oth. I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
And let her speak of me before her father:
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.—
[*Exeunt* IAGO *and* Attendants.
And, till she come, as truly as to Heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,

[12] *Modern* is here used in the sense of *common* or *vulgar;* as in the phrase, "full of wise saws and *modern* instances." — *Habits* seems to be used here much as we now use *colour*, as in "some colour of truth"; that is *semblance*. Some think it a Latinism, like *habita*, things held or believed.

So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father loved me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it:
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance [13] in my travels' history:
Wherein of antres [14] vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak, — such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.[15] This to hear

[13] *Portance* is *carriage* or *deportment.* So in *Coriolanus*, ii. 3: "But your loves, thinking upon his services, took from you the apprehension of his present *portance.*"

[14] Caverns; from *antrum*, Lat. Rymer ridicules this whole circumstance; and Shaftesbury obliquely sneers at it. "Whoever," says Johnson, "ridicules this account of the progress of love, shows his ignorance not only of history, but of nature and manners."

[15] Nothing excited more universal attention than the account brought by Sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from his celebrated voyage to Guiana in 1595, of the cannibals, amazons, and especially of the nation, "whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders." A short extract of the more wonderful passages was also published in Latin and in several other languages in 1599.

Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively.[16] I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore,[17] *In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;*
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it; yet she wish'd
That Heaven had made her such a man: [18] she thank'd me;
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:

adorned with copperplates, representing these cannibals, amazons, and headless people, &c. These extraordinary reports were universally credited; and Othello therefore assumes no other character than what was very common among the celebrated commanders of the Poet's time.

[16] *Intention* and *attention* were once synonymous. "*Intentive*, which listeneth well and is earnestly bent to a thing," says Bullokar, in his *Expositor*, 1616. Lettsom remarks that here the word "seems to mean either *all at a stretch*, or *so as to comprehend the story as a whole*."

[17] To *aver upon faith* or *honour* was considered swearing.

[18] A question has lately been raised whether the meaning here is, that Desdemona wished such a man had been made *for* her, or that she herself had been made such a man; and several have insisted on the latter, lest the lady's delicacy should be impeached!

She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used:
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA *with* IAGO *and* Attendants.

Duke. I think this tale would win my daughter too.—
Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak:
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man!—Come hither, gentle mistress:
Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience?

Des. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I'm bound for life and education;
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you; you're the lord of duty,
I'm hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband;
And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my lord.

Bra. God b' wi' you! I have done.—
Please it your Grace, on to the State-affairs.
Come hither, Moor:
I here do give thee that with all my heart

Which, but [19] thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee. — For my own sake, jewel,
I'm glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang [20] clogs on them. — I have done, my lord.

**Duke.* Let me speak like yourself; [21] and lay a sentence
*Which, as a grise [22] or step, may help these lovers
*Into your favour.
*When remedies are past, the griefs are ended [23]
*By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
*To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
*Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
*What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
*Patience her injury a mockery makes.
*The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
*He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

**Bra.* So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
*We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
*He bears the sentence well that nothing bears
*But the free comfort which from thence he hears;
*But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow
*That to pay grief must of poor patience borrow.
*These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
*Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:

[19] *But* in the exceptive sense; *but that* or *except*. Frequent.

[20] *To hang* for *in* or *by hanging*. See *Macbeth*, page 86, note 26.

[21] "Let me speak *in the same manner as* you have yourself just spoken." He refers to Brabantio's "I here do give thee that with all my heart," &c. And so he goes on to urge acquiescence in what is done, merely because it is done, and cannot be undone.

[22] *Grise* or *greese* is a *step;* from *grés*, French.

[23] This is expressed in a common proverbial form in *Love's Labours Lost* 'Past cure is still past care."

*But words are words; I never yet did hear
*That the bruised heart was piercèd [24] through the ear. —
*Beseech you, now proceed to the affairs of State.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. — Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber [25] the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave Senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down: [26] I do agnize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness; and do undertake
This present war against the Ottomites.

[24] *Piercèd* seems rather harsh and unfitting here. Of course the meaning is, *reached* or *penetrated* with healing virtue. The expression was not uncommon. So Spenser, in *The Faerie Queene*, iv. 8, 26, describing the old hag Sclaunder attributes to her *words* "Which, passing through the eares, would *pierce* the hart." And again in vi. 9, 26, speaking of Melibee's sage discourse:

> Whose sensefull *words empierst his hart* so neare,
> That he was wrapt with double ravishment.

Also in the First Part of Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, i. 2, quoted by Dyce:

> Nor thee nor them, thrice-noble Tamburlaine,
> Shall want my *heart* to be *with gladness pierc'd*.

[25] To *slubber* is, properly, to *neglect* or to *slight*; here it seems to have the sense of *obscuring* by negligence. See *The Merchant*, page 127, note 5.

[26] A *driven* bed is a bed for which the feathers have been selected by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy. — To *agnize* is to *acknowledge*, *confess*, or *avow*. Thus in a *Summarie Report* relative to Mary Queen of Scots, 1586: "A repentant convert *agnizing* her Majesty's great mercie"

Most humbly, therefore, bending to your State,
I crave fit disposition for my wife;
Due reference of place and exhibition;
With such accommodation and besort[27]
As levels with her breeding.

Duke. If you please,
Be't at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear;[28]
And let me find a charter in your voice,
T' assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued
Even to the very quality[29] of my lord:

[27] *Besort* is *attendance* or *companionship*. — *Exhibition* is *allowance* or *provision*. See *King Lear*, page 70, note 6.

[28] *Prosperous* is here used in an active sense, the same as *propitious*. — *Charter*, in the next line, appears to mean about the same as *pledge* or *guaranty*. The word is used in a considerable variety of senses by Shakespeare, and seems to have been rather a favourite with him, as with other Englishmen, probably from the effect of *Magna Charta* and other like instruments in securing and preserving the liberties of England.

[29] *Quality* is here put, apparently, for *nature*, *idiom*, *distinctive grain*, or *personal propriety*. Desdemona means that her heart is tamed and tuned into perfect harmony with the heroic manhood that has spoken out to her from Othello's person; that her soul gravitates towards him as its pre-established centre and home. So that the sense of the passage may be fitly illustrated from the Poet's 111th Sonnet: "And almost thence my na

I saw Othello's visage in his mind;
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear[30] absence. Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords: beseech you, let her will
Have a free way.
Vouch with me, Heaven, I therefore[31] beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply wi' th' heat of young affects,[32] —
In me defunct, — but for her satisfaction,
And to be free and bounteous to her mind.
And Heaven defend your good souls,[33] that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me: [34] no, when light-wing'd toys

ture is subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand." — In "downright violence and storm of fortunes," the meaning probably is the state or course of life which the speaker has boldly ventured upon in forsaking the peaceful home of her father to share the storms and perils, the violences and hardships, of a warrior's career.

[30] *Dear*, in its original sense, was an epithet of any thing that excited intense feeling, whether of pleasure or of pain. So the Poet has it repeatedly. See *Twelfth Night*, page 125, note 6.

[31] "I do not beg it *for this cause*." Shakespeare has repeated instances of *therefore* in the sense of *for this cause* or *to this end*.

[32] *Affects* for *affections*, and in the sense of *passions*. Repeatedly so. See *Winter's Tale*, page 47, note 21. — The word *defunct* properly goes with *heat*, not with *affects*. Othello means simply that the heat of youthful impulse has cooled down; that his passions have become tempered to the rule of judgment.

[33] Old language for "Heaven defend your good souls *from thinking*."

[34] *Because* she is with me. *For* was often used thus.

Of feather'd Cupid seel[35] with wanton dullness
My speculative and active instruments,[36]
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going: th' affair cries haste,
And speed must answer it.

1 Sen. You must away to-night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again. —
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you;
With such things else of quality and respect
As doth import you.[37]

Oth. So please your Grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty and trust:
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good Grace shall think
To be sent after me.[38]

Duke. Let it be so. —
Good night to every one. — [*To* BRAB.] And, noble signior,

[35] *Seel* is an old term in falconry, for *closing up* the eyes of a hawk. Done by sewing the lids together. See *Macbeth*, page 107, note 14.

[36] Meaning his *faculties* of *intelligence* and of *action*. — *That*, next line, is *so that*, or *insomuch that*. Often so.

[37] To "*import* you" is the same as to be *important* to you. The Poet repeatedly uses the verb in the kindred sense of to *concern*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, i. 2: "Her length of sickness, with what else more serious *importeth* thee to know, this bears." Also in *Troilus and Cressida*, iv. 2: "It doth *import* him much to speak with me."

[38] The construction is, "with what else your good Grace shall think needful to be sent after me."

If virtue no delighted [39] beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

1 Sen. Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceived her father, and may thee.[40]

[*Exeunt* Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.

Oth. My life upon her faith! — Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her;
And bring them after in the best advantage.[41] —
Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO *and* DESDEMONA.

Rod. Iago, —

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, think'st thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently [42] drown myself.

Iago. If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

[39] "*Delighted* beauty" evidently means here beauty that *gives* or *yields* delight; that is, *delightful*. An instance of the indiscriminate use of active and passive forms which occurs so often in the old writers.

[40] In real life, how do we look back to little speeches as presentimental of, or contrasted with, an affecting event! Even so, Shakespeare, as secure of being read over and over, of becoming a family friend, provides this passage for his readers, and leaves it to them. — COLERIDGE.

[41] "The best advantage" means the fairest or earliest opportunity.

[42] *Immediately;* the old meaning of *incontinently*.

Iago. O villainous! I have look'd upon the world for four times seven years;[43] and, since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners: so that, if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed-up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it steril with idleness or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible[44] authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.[45]

[43] This clearly ascertains Iago's age to be twenty-eight years; though the general impression of him is that of a much older man. The Poet, no doubt, had a wise purpose in making him so young, as it infers his virulence of mind to be something innate and spontaneous, and not superinduced by harsh experience of the world.

[44] *Corrigible* for *corrective*. This comes under the same head as that in note 39. Adjectives ending in *-able* or *-ible* are often used thus by Shakespeare. See *Twelfth Night*, page 121, note 3.

[45] A *sect* is what the gardeners call a *cutting*. — "This speech," says Coleridge, "comprises the passionless character of Iago. It is all will in intellect; and therefore he is here a bold partisan of a truth, but yet of a truth converted into a falsehood by the absence of all the necessary modifications caused by the frail nature of man."

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: drown thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have profess'd me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour[46] with an usurp'd beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor, — put money in thy purse, — nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration;[47] — put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills; — fill thy purse with money: — the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts[48] shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must; therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring[49] barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of Hell, thou shalt have her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hang'd in compassing thy joy than to be drown'd and go without her.

[46] *Defeat* was used for *disfigurement* or *alteration* of features: from the French *défaire*. *Favour* is *countenance*.

[47] *Sequestration* is defined to be "a putting apart, a separation of a thing from the possession of both those that contend for it."

[48] Alluding, probably, to the *ceratonia* or *carob*, an evergreen growing in the south of Europe, and bearing sweet black pods. Commerce had made the fruit well known in London, and *locust* was the popular name for it.

[49] *Erring* is here used in its Latin sense of *erratic* or *wandering*.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me;—go, make money. I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst dishonour him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse;[50] go, provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i' the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear?

Rod. I am changed: I'll go sell all my land.

Iago. Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse.—

[*Exit* RODERIGO.

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that in my home
He's done me wrong: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety.[51] He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.

[50] *Traverse* is here used as a military term, for *march*. The usage was common. See *2 Henry the Fourth*, page 126, note 24.

[51] I will act as if I were certain of the fact. "He *holds* me well" is, he entertains a good opinion of me.

Cassio's a proper[52] man: let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will
In double knavery — How, how? Let's see: —
After some time, t' abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife:
He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,[53]
To be suspected; framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are.
I have't; it is engender'd: Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A seaport Town in Cyprus.*[1] *A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO *and two* Gentlemen.

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea?
1 Gent. Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;
I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main
Descry a sail.

[52] *Proper* here, as very often in these plays, means *handsome.*

[53] *Dispose* for *disposition.* Shakespeare has a good many words shortened in much the same way.

[1] The principal seaport town of Cyprus is *Famagusta;* where there was formerly a strong fort and commodious haven, "neare which," says Knolles, "standeth an old *castle*, with four towers after the ancient manner of building." To this castle we find that Othello presently repairs.

Mon. Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements:
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet:
For, do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds;
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,[2]
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,[3]
And quench the guards of th' ever-fixèd pole:
I never did like molestation view
On the enchafèd flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they're drown'd;
It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3 Gent. News, lads! our wars are done.
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
That their designment halts: a noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How! is this true?

3 Gent. The ship is here put in,
La Veronesa;[4] Michael Cassio,

[2] There is implied a comparison of the "wind-shaked surge" to the war-horse; the Poet probably having in mind the passage of Job: "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his *neck* with thunder?"

[3] The constellation near the polar star. The next line alludes to the star *Arctophylax*, which literally signifies the guard of the bear.

[4] *Veronesa* refers to the ship. It is true, the same speaker has just called

Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,
Is come on shore: the Moor himself's at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I'm glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

3 Gent. But this same Cassio, — though he speak of comfort
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.

Mon. Pray Heavens he be;
For I have served him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier.[5] Let's to the seaside, ho!
As well to see the vessel that's come in
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Even till we make the main and th' aerial blue
An indistinct regard.[6]

3 Gent. Come, let's do so;
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor! O, let the Heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea!

the ship "a noble ship of *Venice*"; but Verona was tributary to the Venetian State; so that there is no reason why she might not belong to Venice, and still take her name from Verona.

[5] "A *full* soldier" is a *complete* or *finished* soldier. See page 51, note 14.

[6] That is, "till, to our vision, the sea and the sky so melt into each other as to be *indistinguishable*." — Here may be fitly quoted one of Coleridge's notes: "Observe in how many ways Othello is made, first our acquaintance, then our friend, then the object of our anxiety, before the deeper interest is to be approached."

Mon. Is he well shipp'd?
Cas. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance;[7]
Therefore my hopes, not suffocate to death,
Stand in bold cure.[8]
[*Within.*] A sail, a sail, a sail!

Enter a fourth Gentleman.

Cas. What noise?
4 Gent. The town is empty; on the brow o' the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry *A sail!*
Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governor.
[*Guns heard.*
2 Gent. They do discharge their shot of courtesy:
Our friends at least.
Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.
2 Gent. I shall. [*Exit.*
Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?
Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in th' essential vesture of creation

[7] Of *allowed* and approved *expertness*. *Allowance*, in old English, sometimes means *estimation*. See *Hamlet*, page 134, note 6.

[8] Cassio, though anxious, does not despair; and the meaning of "Stand in bold cure" seems to be, "my hopes, though near dying, stay themselves upon, or are kept alive by, *bold* conjecture"; or, it may be, "are *confident* of being cured." See *King Lear*, page 150, note 15. — *Suffocate*, of course, for *suffocated*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "This chaos, when degree is *suffocate*, follows the choking." Shakespeare has many preterites formed in the same way; as "one of an *ingraft* infirmity," in the third scene of this Act.

Does tire the ingener.[9]

Re-enter second Gentleman.

How now! who has put in?

2 Gent. 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He's had most favourable and happy speed.
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands, —
Traitors ensteep'd [10] to clog the guiltless keel, —
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal [11] natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

Mon. What is she?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts
A se'nnight's speed. — Great God, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with Thine own powerful breath,

[9] By "the *essential vesture* of creation" the Poet means, apparently, her *outward form*, which in *The Merchant of Venice* he calls "the muddy *vesture* of decay." The meaning of the whole clause seems to be, "She is one who surpasses all description, and in real beauty, or outward form, goes beyond the power of the artist's inventive or expressive pencil." It appears that *inginer* or *ingener* was sometimes used for *painter* or *artist*. So Jonson, in his *Sejanus*, i. 1: "No, Silius, we are no good *ingineers*; we want their *fine* arts." And Flecknoe, speaking of painting, 1664: "The stupendous works of your great *ingeniers*." — For this use of *paragon*, see *Antony and Cleopatra*, page 61, note 7.

[10] *Ensteep'd* here means simply hid in the water, *submerged*; a frequent use of the word. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 11:

> Now gan the golden Phœbus for to *steepe*
> His fierie face in billows of the west.

[11] *Mortal* is *deadly*, *destructive*; the more common meaning of the word in Shakespeare. See *Macbeth*, page 68, note 6.

That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort ! — O, behold,

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, *and* Attendants

The riches of the ship is come on shore !
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees. —
Hail to thee, lady ! and the grace of Heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round !

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cas. He is not yet arrived ; nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear — How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship. But, hark ! a sail.

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail ! [*Guns heard.*

2 Gent. They give their greeting to the citadel:
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news. —
[*Exit* Gentleman.
Good ancient, you are welcome ; — [*To* EMILIA.] welcome,
mistress. —
Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners ; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.[12] [*Kissing her.*

[12] Observe Othello's "honest," and Cassio's "bold" Iago; and Cassio's full guileless-hearted wishes for the safety and love-raptures of Othello and "the divine Desdemona." And note also the exquisite circumstance of Cassio's kissing Iago's wife, as if it ought to be impossible that the dullest auditor should not feel Cassio's religious love of Desdemona's purity. Iago's

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on; you're pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries,[13] devils being offended.

Des. O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't;
For I am nothing, if not critical.

Des. Come on, assay. There's one gone to the harbour?

Iago. Ay, madam.

Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

Iago. I am about it; but, indeed, my invention

answers are the sneers which a proud bad intellect feels towards women, and expresses to a wife. Surely it ought to be considered a very exalted compliment to women, that all the sarcasms on them in Shakespeare are put in the mouths of villains. — COLERIDGE.

[13] "When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity."

Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze, —
It plucks out brains and all: but my Muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd:
If she be fair and wise, — fairness and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How if fair and foolish?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair;
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Des. These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i' the ale-house. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed; one that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself? [14]

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;
Fled from her wish, and yet said *Now I may;*
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;

[14] "The sense," say Warburton, "is this: One that was so conscious of her own merit, and of the authority her character had with every one, that she durst call upon malice itself to vouch for her. This was strong commendation. And the character only of clearest virtue; which could force malice even against its nature, to do justice." — To *put on* is to *provoke*, to *incite*.

She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;[15]
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind;
See suitors following, and not look behind;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were, —

Des. To do what?

Iago. — To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.[16]

Des. O most lame and impotent conclusion! — Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. — How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal[17] censurer?

Cas. He speaks home, madam: you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship.[18] You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kiss'd your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in.[19] Very good; well kiss'd! an excellent courtesy! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? [*Trumpet within.*] — The Moor! I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'Tis truly so.

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes!

[15] The head was esteemed the best part of a codfish, the tail the worst of a salmon. The two are here put for delicate and coarse fare in general.

[16] That is, to suckle children and keep the accounts of the household.

[17] *Liberal* was very often used in the sense of *loose-spoken* or *licentious*.

[18] To *gyve* is to *fetter*, to *shackle*. It may be as well to observe that *courtship* is the same as *courtesy*, that is, complimentary or courtly behaviour.

[19] *To play the sir* is to show good breeding and gallantry.

Enter OTHELLO *and* Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior ![20]

Des. My dear Othello !

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy !
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death !
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As Hell's from Heaven ! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy ; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The Heavens forbid
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow !

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers ! —
I cannot speak enough of this content ;
It stops me here ; it is too much of joy :
And this, and this, the greatest discords be [*Kissing her.*
That e'er our hearts shall make !

Iago. [*Aside.*] O, you are well tuned now !
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.[21]

[20] Perhaps Othello intends a playful allusion to the unwillingness Desdemona has expressed to "be left behind, a moth of peace, and he go to the war." Steevens, however, thinks it was a term of endearment derived from the old French Poets; as Ronsard, in his Sonnets, often calls the ladies *guèrrières.*

[21] Coleridge pronounces Iago "a being next to devil, and only not quite devil." It is worth noting that Milton's Satan relents at the prospect of

Oth. Come, let us to the castle. —
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.
How does my old acquaintance of this isle? —
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;
I've found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion,[22] and I dote
In mine own comforts. — I pr'ythee, good Iago,
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers:
Bring thou the master to the citadel;
He is a good one, and his worthiness
Does challenge much respect. — Come, Desdemona,
Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, *and* Attendants.

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant, — as, they say, base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them, — list me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court-of-guard.[23] First, I must tell thee this, Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him! why, 'tis not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger thus,[24] and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her fantastical lies: and will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to

ruining the happiness before him, and prefaces the deed with a gush of pity for the victims; whereas the same thought puts Iago in a transport of jubilant ferocity. Is our idea of Satan's wickedness enhanced by his thus indulging such feelings, and then acting in defiance of them, or as if he had them not? or is Iago more devilish than he?

[22] Out of method, without any settled order of discourse.

[23] The place where the guard musters.

[24] On thy mouth to stop it, while thou art listening to a wiser man.

look on the Devil?[25] When the blood is made dull, there should be — again to inflame it — loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners, and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of these required conveniences,[26] her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted, — as it is a most pregnant[27] and unforced position, — who stands so eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt[28] and most hidden-loose affection? why, none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave; a finder-out of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself; a devilish knave! Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after: a pestilent-complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.[29]

Iago. Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been bless'd, she would never have loved

[25] Another characteristic fling at Othello's colour. See page 52, note 17.

[26] *Convenience* in the Latin sense of *fitness, harmony, accordance.*

[27] *Pregnant* is *plain, manifest,* or *full of proof in itself.*

[28] This peculiar use of *salt* occurs several times in Shakespeare. So in *Measure for Measure*, v. 1: "Whose *salt* imagination yet hath wrong'd your well-defended honour." — *Hidden-loose* is *secretly licentious.* A similar phrase occurs in Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, ii. 1: "His course is so irregular, so *loose-affected* and depriv'd of grace." Here *loose-affected* is *licentiously disposed.* — *Conscionable*, line before, is *conscientious.*

[29] *Condition*, as usual, for *temper* or *disposition.* Qualities of mind and heart in general were included under the term.

the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. By this hand, an index [30] and obscure prologue to the history of foul thoughts. But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline; [31] or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification [32] shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by-and-by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu. [*Exit.*

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;
That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit: [33]

[30] *Indexes* were formerly *prefixed* to books. See *Hamlet*, page 158, note 5.

[31] Throwing a slur upon his discipline.

[32] *Qualification*, in our old writers, signifies *appeasement, pacification, assuagement of anger*. "To appease and *qualifie* one that is angry; tranquillum facere ex irato." — BARET.

[33] *Credit* for *credibility*, aptness to be believed.

The Moor — howbeit that I endure him not —
Is of a constant-loving noble nature;
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;
Not out of absolute lust, — though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin, —
But partly led to diet my revenge,
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath tamper'd with my wife: the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife;
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
If this poor brach of Venice, whom I trash [34]
For his quick hunting, stand the putting-on,[35]
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb;[36]

[34] *Brach*, according to an old definition in Spelman's *Glossary*, is a scenting dog, "or any fine-nosed hound." To *trash* is to *check*, *restrain*, or *keep back*, as when a hound is too eager and forward in the chase. The word is fitly used here of Roderigo who, in his quest of Desdemona, is too impatient for the end to stay for what Iago deems the necessary operation of time and means. See *The Tempest*, page 52, note 19.

[35] The figure of a hound is still kept up. "The putting-on" is the *inciting* or the *setting-on*, as of dogs; so explained in note 14 of this scene. Iago's thought appears to be that Roderigo may not *hold out* in his quest, that from his very eagerness he may grow weary of the instigations, and give over in disgust, or refuse to *stand through* the process.

[36] "In the *rank garb*" is merely in the *right-down*, or *straight-forward style*. In *King Lear*, Cornwall says of Kent in disguise, that he "doth affect a saucy roughness, and constrains the *garb* quite from his nature." Gower says of Fluellen, in *King Henry V.*, "You thought, because he could not speak English in the native *garb*, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel."

Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass,
And practising upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness.[37] 'Tis here, but yet confused:
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. [*Exit.*

Scene II. — *A Street.*

Enter a Herald *with a Proclamation;* People *following.*

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition[1] of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaim'd. All offices[2] are open; and there is full liberty of feasting

[37] Here we have, perhaps, the most appalling outcome of Iago's proper character, namely, a pride of intellect, or lust of the brain, which exults above all things in being able to make himself and others pass for just the reverse of what they are; that is, in being an overmatch for truth and Nature themselves. And this soliloquy is, I am apt to think, Shakespeare's supreme instance of psychogogic subtilty and insight; as it is also Iago's most pregnant disclosure of his real springs of action, or what Coleridge aptly calls "the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity." For it is not that Iago really believes or suspects that either Cassio or Othello has wronged him in the way he intimates: he is merely seeking to opiate or appease certain qualms of conscience by a sort of extemporized make-believe in that kind. The purpose he has conceived against them is, as Coleridge says, "too fiendish for his own steady view, — for the lonely gaze of a being next to devil, and only not quite devil."

[1] "The *mere perdition*" is the *entire loss* or *destruction*. This use of *mere* is frequent with the Poet.

[2] All *rooms* or *places* in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared or served out. See *Macbeth*, page 79, note 3.

from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *A Hall in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, *and* Attendants.

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to outsport discretion.

Cas. Iago hath direction what to do;
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
Will I look to't.

Oth. Iago is most honest.
Michael, good night: to-morrow with your earliest
Let me have speech with you. — [*To* DESDEMONA.] Come, my dear love. —
Good night. [*Exeunt* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, *and* Attendants.

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us[1] thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let us not therefore blame.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

[1] "Cast us" is *dismissed* us; rid himself of our company. One of Iago's sly thrusts, or covert slurs.

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to them! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago: I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too,[2] and, behold, what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man! 'tis a night of revels: the gallants desire it.

Cass. Where are they?

Iago. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

Cass. I'll do't; but it dislikes me.[3] [*Exit.*

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool Roderigo,
Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus — noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,[4]

[2] "Craftily qualified" is slily mixed with water, *diluted.*

[3] "It *dislikes* me" is it *displeases* me, or *I* dislike *it.* Often so.

[4] Who guard their honour from the least approach to insult; as in the description of a soldier in *As You Like It*, "Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel."

The very elements[5] of this warlike isle —
Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,
Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle. But here they come:
If consequence do but approve my dream,[6]
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO, *followed by* MONTANO, Gentlemen, *and* Servant *with wine.*

Cas. 'Fore God, they have given me a rouse[7] already.

Mon. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho!

[Sings.] *And let me the canakin clink, clink:*
And let me the canakin clink!
A soldier's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why, then let a soldier drink!

Some wine, boys!

Cas. 'Fore God, an excellent song.

Iago. I learn'd it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your Hollander, — Drink, ho! — are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead

[5] As quarrelsome as the *discordia semina rerum;* as quick in opposition as fire and water.

[6] Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a *dream.* — *Consequence* for *issue* or *result.*

[7] *Rouse* is the same in sense and in origin as our word *carouse*

drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be fill'd.[8]

Cas. To the health of our general!

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.[9]

Iago. O sweet England!

[Sings.] *King Stephen was a worthy peer,*
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor lown.

He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down;
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.[10]

Some wine, ho!

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear't again?

[8] In *The Captain* of Beaumont and Fletcher, one of the persons asks, "Are the Englishmen such stubborn drinkers?" and another answers thus: "Not a leak at sea can suck more liquor: you shall have their children christened in mull'd sack, and at five years old able to knock a *Dane* down." And in Henry Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman*, 1622, we have the following: "Within these fiftie or threescore yeares it was a rare thing with us to see a drunken man. But, since we had to doe in the quarrell of the Netherlands, the custom of drinking and pledging healthes was brought over into England; wherein let the Dutch be their owne judges, if we equall them not; yea, I think, rather excell them." — In the text, as elsewhere, *pottle* is used as a general term for a drinking-cup. So a little before, "caroused potations *pottle-deep*"; which means *emptied the cup*, or, in pot-house language, pledged her *to the bottom*.

[9] In the old pot-house cant or slang, to do a man justice, or to do him right, was to keep up with him in drinking.

[10] These stanzas are copied, with a few slight variations, from an old ballad entitled "Take thy old Cloak about thee," which is reprinted entire in Percy's *Reliques*.

Cas. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well, God's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part, — no offence to the general, nor any man of quality, — I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs. — Forgive us our sins! — Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well, then; you must not think, then, that I am drunk. [*Exit.*

Mon. To th' platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow that is gone before:
He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction;[11] and do but see his vice:
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as th' other: 'tis pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts in him,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep:

[11] How differently the liar speaks of Cassio's soldiership to Montano and to Roderigo! He is now talking where he is liable to be called to account for his words.

He'll watch the horologe a double set,[12]
If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon. It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. [*Aside to* RODERIGO.] How now, Roderigo!
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. [*Exit* RODERIGO.

Mon. And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an ingraft infirmity:
It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil, — But, hark! what noise?

[*Cry within*, Help! help!

Re-enter CASSIO, *driving in* RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue! you rascal!

Mon. What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cas. A knave teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.[13]

Rod. Beat me!

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue?

[*Striking* RODERIGO.

[12] If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours. The word *horologe* is familiar to most of our ancient writers: Chaucer often uses it.

[13] "A *twiggen* bottle" is a bottle enclosed in wicker-work of *twigs*.

Mon. Nay, good lieutenant;
[*Staying him.*
I pray you, sir, hold your hand.
Cas. Let me go, sir,
Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.
Mon. Come, come, you're drunk.
Cas. Drunk! [*They fight.*
Iago. [*Aside to* RODERIGO.] Away, I say; go out, and cry a mutiny! — [*Exit* RODERIGO.
Nay, good lieutenant, — alas, gentlemen! —
Help, ho! — Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — sir; —
Help, masters! — Here's a goodly watch indeed!
[*Bell rings.*
Who's that which rings the bell? — Diablo, ho!
The town will rise: — God's will, lieutenant, hold!
You will be shamed for ever.

Re-enter OTHELLO *and* Attendants.

Oth. What is the matter here?
Mon. Zounds, I bleed still! I am hurt to th' death.
[*Faints.*
Oth. Hold, for your lives!
Iago. Hold, ho! Lieutenant, — sir, — Montano, — gentlemen!
Have you forgot all sense of place and duty? Hold!
The general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame!
Oth. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which Heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl!
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion. —

Silence that dreadful bell! it frights the isle
From her propriety. — What is the matter, masters? —
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know: friends all but now, even now,
In quarter,[14] and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed; and then, but now —
As if some planet had unwitted men —
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish[15] odds;
And would in action glorious I had lost
Those legs that brought me to a part of it!

Oth. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?[16]

Cas. I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
The gravity and stillness of your youth
The world hath noted, and your name is great
In mouths of wisest censure:[17] what's the matter,
That you unlace your reputation thus,
And spend your rich opinion[18] for the name
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger:
Your officer, Iago, can inform you —

[14] "In quarter" means, apparently, *on their station;* the place of duty assigned them.

[15] *Peevish* here is *foolish* or *silly;* a common use of the word in Shakespeare's time.

[16] That you have thus forgot yourself.

[17] *Censure* is *judgment;* as the word was constantly used.

[18] *Opinion* for *reputation* or *character* occurs in other places. — *Spend* in the sense of *waste, spoil,* or *throw away.* — To *unlace* is to *ungird,* to *lay bare,* to *expose.*

While I spare speech, which something now offends me —
Of all that I do know: nor know I aught
By me that's said or done amiss this night;
Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,
And to defend ourselves it be a sin
When violence assails us.

Oth. Now, by Heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgment collied,[19]
Assays to lead the way: if I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on;
And he that is approved in[20] this offence,
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
Shall lose me. What! in a town with war
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court of guard and safety!
'Tis monstrous. — Iago, who began't?

Mon. If, partially affined, or leagued in office,[21]
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near:
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth

[19] *Collied* is *blackened*, as with smut or coal, and figuratively means here *obscured, darkened.*

[20] *Approved in* means *proved to be in.*

[21] If, rendered *partial* or drawn into partiality, by *official* fellowship, affinity, or sympathy.

Shall nothing wrong him. — Thus it is, general:
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow crying out for help;
And Cassio following with determined sword
To execute upon him.[22] Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause:
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest by his clamour — as it so fell out —
The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath; which till to-night
I ne'er might say before. When I came back, —
For this was brief, — I found them close together,
At blow and thrust; even as again they were
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter cannot I report:
But men are men; the best sometimes forget.
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him, —
As men in rage strike those that wish them best, —
Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, received
From him that fled some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.

Oth. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio. — Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine. —

Re-enter DESDEMONA, *attended.*

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up! —

[22] The construction is, "with sword, determined to execute upon him."

I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed. — Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon. —

[*To* MONTANO, *who is led off.*

Iago, look with care about the town,
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted. —
Come, Desdemona: 'tis the soldiers' life
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

[*Exeunt all but* IAGO *and* CASSIO.

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Ay, past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. — My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more offence in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: you are but now cast in his mood,[23] a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk, and speak parrot? and squabble, swagger, swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shad-

[23] Thrown off, or dismissed in a flash or fit of anger.

ow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

Iago. What was he that you follow'd with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is't possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. — O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough: how came you thus recovered?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler. As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by-and-by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unbless'd, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approved it, sir. — I drunk!

Iago. You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general: I may say so in this respect, for that

he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces. Confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger [24] than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; [25] and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit.*

Iago. And what's he, then, that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal [26] to thinking, and, indeed, the course
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
Th' inclining [27] Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful [28]
As the free elements. And then for her

[24] A piece of verbal disorder, but clear enough in the meaning: "your love shall grow stronger for this crack."

[25] I *believe* it *willingly;* without any protestation on your part.

[26] *Probal* is *probable;* perhaps a word of the Poet's own coining, used for metrical convenience.

[27] *Inclining* here signifies *compliant*, or *yielding*.

[28] Corresponding to *benigna*. Liberal, bountiful as the elements, out of which all things are produced.

To win the Moor, — were't to renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemèd sin, —
His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I, then, a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course
Directly to his good?[29] Divinity of Hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest[30] at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, —
That she repeals[31] him for dishonest cause;
And, by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. —

Re-enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo!

Rod. I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry.[32] My money is almost

[29] The order is, "this course directly parallel to his good." *Parallel to* is *coinciding with*, and *good* s what he *thinks* good; his *wish*.

[30] "When devils will *instigate* to their blackest sins, they *tempt*," &c. This use of *put on* has occurred before. See page 86, note 14. — *Suggest* and its cognates in the sense of *tempt* occurs frequently.

[31] *Repeal* in the sense of *recall* or *restore*.

[32] *Cry* for *pack:* so used in the language of the chase. See *Hamlet* page 145, note 43.

spent: I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgell'd; and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio.
Though other things grow fair against the Sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe: [33]
Content thyself awhile. By th' Mass, 'tis morning;
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted.[34]
Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:
Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit* RODERIGO.]. — Two things are to be done:
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
I'll set her on:
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,
And bring him jump [35] when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife: ay, that's the way;
Dull not device by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*

[33] This is rather obscure; but the meaning seems to be, "Though, in the sunshine of good luck, the other parts of our scheme are promising well, yet we must expect that the part which first meets with opportunity, or time of blossom, will soonest come to harvest, or catch success." Iago wants to possess Roderigo's mind with the triumph that has crowned their first step, that from thence he may take heart and hope for the rest of the course.

[34] *Retire thee* is *withdraw thyself*. "Where thou art *billeted*" was the camp phrase for "where your lodging is assigned." From the tickets or *billets* that designated the quarters, and authorized the holders to claim them.

[35] *Jump* for *exactly* or *just*. Repeatedly so. See *Hamlet*, page 49, note 14.

ACT III.

SCENE I.— *Cyprus. Before the Castle.*

Enter CASSIO *and some* Musicians.

Cas. Masters, play here; I will content your pains; Something that's brief; and bid *Good morrow, general.*[1]

[Music.

Enter the Clown.

Clo. Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?[2]

1 Mus. How, sir, how!

Clo. Are these, I pray you, wind-instruments?

1 Mus. Ay, marry, are they, sir.

Clo. O, thereby hangs a tale. But, masters, here's money for you; and the general so likes your music, that he desires you, of all loves,[3] to make no more noise with it.

1 Mus. Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again; but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

1 Mus. We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away: go; vanish into air; away! [*Exeunt* Musicians.

[1] It was usual for friends to serenade a new-married couple on the morning after the celebration of the marriage, or to greet them with a *morning song* to bid them good morrow.

[2] Alluding to a certain disease which is said to have appeared first at Naples, and which was noted for the mischief it played with the nose.

[3] An old phrase meaning about the same as *for love's sake*, or *by all means*. It occurs again in *The Merry Wives*, ii. 2.

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

Cas. Do, good my friend. — [*Exit* Clown.

Enter IAGO.

In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been a-bed, then?

Cas. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I've made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: my suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free.

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. [*Exit* IAGO.] — I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.[4]

[4] In consequence of this line a doubt has been entertained concerning the country of Iago. Cassio was undoubtedly a Florentine, as appears by the first scene of the play, where he is expressly called one. That Iago was a Venetian is proved by a speech in the third scene of this Act, and by what he says in the fifth Act, after having stabbed Roderigo. All that Cassio means to say in the present passage is, "I never experienced more honesty and kindness even in one of my own countrymen."

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure;[5] but all will sure be well.
The general and his wife are talking of it;
And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies,
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom
He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you,
And needs no other suitor but his likings
To take the safest occasion by the front
To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you, —
If you think fit, or that it may be done, —
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

Emil. Pray you, come in:
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I'm much bound to you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, *and* Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
And, by him, do my duties to the Senate:
That done, I will be walking on the works;

[5] "*Your* displeasure" here means the displeasure you have incurred from Othello. An instance of the *objective* genitive in cases where present usage admits only the subjective genitive; that is, Othello is here regarded as the subject of the displeasure, Cassio as the object of it. Shakespeare has many similar expressions. See *Hamlet*, page 194, note 21.

Repair there to me.

Iago. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

Oth. This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see't?

Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Garden of the Castle.*

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, *and* EMILIA.

Des. Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves my husband,
As if the case were his.

Des. O, that's an honest fellow. — Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. O sir, I thank you. You do love my lord:
You've known him long; and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.[1]

[1] He may either of himself think it politic to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my readmission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten. — JOHNSON.

Des. Do not doubt that;[2] before Emilia here
I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I'll watch him tame,[3] and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle every thing he does
With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

Emil. Madam, here comes my lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay, and hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now: I'm very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, do your discretion. [*Exit* CASSIO

Enter OTHELLO *and* IAGO.

Iago. Ha! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say?

Iago. Nothing, my lord; or if — I know not what.

Oth. Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

Iago. Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe 'twas he.

Des. How now, my lord!
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

[2] Do not *fear* that. *Doubt* was often used in the sense of *fear*.

[3] Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep. To this Shakespeare alludes.

Oth. Who is't you mean?
Des. Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take;
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,[4]
I have no judgment in an honest face.
I pr'ythee, call him back.
Oth. Went he hence now?
Des. Ay, sooth; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.
Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemon; some other time.
Des. But shall't be shortly?
Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.
Des. Shall't be to-night at supper?
Oth. No, not to-night.
Des. To-morrow dinner, then?
Oth. I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.
Des. Why, then to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:
I pr'ythee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason, —
Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of the best, — is not almost a fault
T' incur a private check. When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,
What you would ask me, that I should deny,

[4] *Cunning* here means *knowledge*, an old sense of the word.

Or stand so mammering on.[5] What! Michael Cassio,
That came a-wooing with you; and so many a time,
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to-do[6]
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much, —

Oth. Pr'ythee, no more: let him come when he will;
I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
Or sue to you to do peculiar profit
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,
And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing;
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you? no: farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona: I'll come to thee straight.

Des. Emilia, come. — Be as your fancies teach you;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [*Exit, with* EMILIA.

Oth. Excellent wretch,[7] perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! and, when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.[8]

[5] So *hesitating*, in such doubtful suspense. So in Lyly's *Euphues*, 1580: "Neither stand in a *mamering* whether it be best to depart or not."

[6] Shakespeare several times has *to-do* in the exact sense of *ado*.

[7] *Wretch*, as here used, was the strongest expression of endearment in the language. Shakespeare has it repeatedly so.

[8] The meaning is, "Ere I cease to love thee, the world itself shall be reduced to its primitive chaos." — *But*, again, in its exceptive sense; *but that*, or, "*if* I do *not* love thee." See *The Merchant*, page 121, note 18.

Iago. My noble lord, —

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?

Oth. He did, from first to last: [9] why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Oth. O, yes; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed!

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?
Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord!

Oth. Honest! ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord!

Oth. *Think, my lord!* — By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. — Thou dost mean something.
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?
And, when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst *Indeed!*
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst, shut up in thy brain,
Some horrible conceit! If thou dost love me,

[9] In Act i. sc. 2, when Iago, speaking of the Moor to Cassio, says, "He's married," Cassio asks, "To whom?" Yet here he seems to have known all about it. The explanation is, that Cassio there feigned ignorance, in order to keep his friend's secret till it should be publicly known.

Show me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think thou dost;
And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just
They're close delations,[10] working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.

Iago. For Michael Cassio,
I dare be sworn — I think that he is honest.[11]

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem;
Or, those that be not, would they might seem none!

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why, then I think Cassio's an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this:
I pr'ythee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate; and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

Iago. Good my lord, pardon me:
Though I am bound to every act of duty,

[10] "Close delations" are secret accusings, intimations, or informations. So in Jonson's *Volpone*, ii. 3: "Yet, if I do it not, they may *delate* my slackness to my patron." — It should be noted, that in all this part of the dialogue the doubts started in Othello by the villain's artful insinuations have reference only to Cassio. There is not the least sign that the Moor's thoughts anywise touch his wife; and Iago seems perplexed that his suspicions have lighted elsewhere than he had intended. The circumstance is very material in reference to Othello's predispositions, or as regards the origin and nature of his "jealousy."

[11] Iago is supposed to pause at *sworn*, and correct himself, as if he were speaking with the most scrupulous candour.

I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they're vile and false, —
As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit
With meditations lawful? [12]

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and makest his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you, —
Though [13] I perchance am vicious in my guess,
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses,[14] and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not, — that your wisdom yet,
From one that so imperfectly conceits,[15]
Would take no notice; nor build yourself a trouble

[12] Who has so virtuous a breast that some impure conceptions and uncharitable surmises will not sometimes enter into it; hold a session there, as in a regular court, and "bench by the side" of authorized and lawful thoughts? A *leet* is also called a *law-day*. "This court, in whose manor soever kept, was accounted the king's court, and commonly held every half year": it was a meeting of the hundred "to certify the king of the good manners and government of the inhabitants."

[13] Here we seem to have an instance — and there are many such — of *though* used in a causal and not in a concessive sense; that is, for *since* or *inasmuch as*. See *Twelfth Night*, page 78, note 21.

[14] Iago here feigns self-distrust, and confesses that he has the natural infirmity or plague of a suspicious and prying temper, that he may make Othello trust him the more strongly. So men often prate about, and even magnify, their own faults, in order to cheat others into a pursuasion of their rectitude and candour.

[15] In old language, to *conceit* is to *understand*, to *judge* or *conceive*. The word, both verb and substantive, is always used by Shakespeare in that sense, or one closely allied to that.

Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By Heaven, I'll know thy thoughts!

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Oth. Ha!

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster which doth make
The meat it feeds on:[16] that husband lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

Oth. O misery!

Iago. Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
But riches fineless[17] is as poor as Winter

[16] Meaning that jealousy is a *self-generated* passion; that its causes are subjective, or that it lives on what it imputes, not on what it finds. And so Emilia afterwards describes it: "Tis a monster begot upon itself, born on itself." Iago is, in his way, a consummate metaphysician, and answers perfectly to Burke's description: "Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man."

[17] That is, *endless, unbounded.* Warburton observes that this is finely expressed — *Winter* producing no fruits.

To him that ever fears he shall be poor. —
Good Heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

Oth. Why, why is this?
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the Moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate [18] and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago!
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,
Away at once with love or jealousy!

Iago. I'm glad of it; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I'm bound,
Receive it from me: I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;

[18] This is the only known instance of *exsufflicate*. Phillips interprets *sufflation* "a puffing up, a making to swell with blowing." In Plautus we have, "*Sufflavit* nescio quid uxore"; which Cooper renders, "He hath *whispered* something in his wifes eare whatsoever it be." Richardson's explanation is, "*Exsufflicate*, in Shakespeare, is not improbably a misprint for *exsufflate*, that is, *efflate* or *efflated*, puffed out, and, consequently, exaggerated, extravagant; to which *blown* is added, not so much for the sake of a second epithet, with a new meaning, as of giving emphasis to the first."

Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure: [19]
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty,[20] be abused; look to't.
I know our country disposition well:
In Venice they do let Heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

Oth. Dost thou say so?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And, when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.[21]

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then;
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seel her father's eyes up close as oak,[22] —
He thought 'twas witchcraft, — But I'm much to blame:
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
For too much loving you.

Oth. I'm bound to thee for ever.

Iago. I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. I'faith, I fear it has.
I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved:

[19] *Secure* in the Latin sense; *careless*, or *over-confident*. Often so.

[20] *Self-bounty* here means inherent and spontaneous generosity.

[21] This is one of Iago's artfullest strokes. The instinctive shrinkings and tremblings of Desdemona's modest virgin love are ascribed to craft, and made to appear a most refined and elaborate course of deception. His deep science of human nature enables him to *divine* how she appeared.

[22] Oak is a tough, close-grained wood. So that *close as oak* probably means *as close as the grain of oak*. — *Seel* has been explained before. See page 75, note 35.

I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success [23]
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend; —
My lord, I see you're moved.

Oth. No, not much moved:
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so! and long live you to think so!

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself, —

Iago. Ay, there's the point; as, — to be bold with you, —
Not to affect many proposèd matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Whereto we see in all things nature tends; —
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.
But pardon me: I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And happily [24] repent.

Oth. Farewell, farewell:
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife t' observe: leave me, Iago.

[23] *Success* here means *consequence* or *event*. So in Sidney's *Arcadia* "Straight my heart misgave me some evil *success!*" Often so.

[24] Where a trisyllable was wanted, the poets often used *happily* for *haply* that is, *perhaps*. — The meaning of what precedes is, "Her will, *falling back upon* her better judgment, may *go to comparing* you with the forms of her countrymen."

Iago. My lord, I take my leave. [*Going.*

Oth. Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. [*Returning.*] My lord, I would I might entreat your Honour
To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:
Although 'tis fit that Cassio have his place, —
For, sure, he fills it up with great ability, —
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
You shall by that perceive him and his means: [25]
Note if your lady strain his entertainment [26]
With any strong or vehement importunity;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time
Let me be thought too busy in my fears, —
As worthy cause I have to fear I am, —
And hold her free, I do beseech your Honour.

Oth. Fear not my government.

Iago. I once more take my leave. [*Exit.*

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learnèd spirit,
Of human dealings. [27] If I do prove her haggard, [28]
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,

[25] You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means*, his most powerful *interest*, is by the solicitation of your lady.

[26] Press his readmission to pay and office.

[27] So the passage is commonly printed, the explanation being, "He knows with a learned spirit all qualities of human dealings." But I suspect the true sense to be, "He knows all qualities with a spirit learned *in respect of* human dealings." So *of* is often used. See *Hamlet*, page 125, note 2.

[28] *Haggard* is *wild, unreclaimed;* commonly used of a hawk. So in Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici:* "Thus I teach my *haggard* and *unreclaimed* reason to stoop to the lure of faith." A passage in *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, 1612, shows that the term was sometimes applied to a wanton: "Is this your perch, you *haggard?* fly to the *stews*."

I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune.[29] Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers [30] have; or, for I am declined
Into the vale of years, — yet that's not much; —
She's gone; I am abused; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For other's uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogatived are they less than the base;
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:
Even then this forkèd plague is fated to us
When we do quicken.[31] Desdemona comes:
If she be false, O, then Heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe't.

Re-enter DESDEMONA *and* EMILIA.

Des. How now, my dear Othello!

[29] *Jesses* are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist. "The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind; if she flys with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If therefore a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was *let down the wind*, and from that time shifted for herself and preyed at fortune." So in Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis:*

> Have you not seen, when, *whistled* from the fist,
> Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
> And, with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
> Straight flies at cheek, and clips it *down the wind*.

[30] That is, men of intrigue. *Chambering* and wantonness are mentioned together by Saint Paul, Romans, xiii. 13.

[31] When we begin to live. The proper meaning of *quick*.

Your dinner, and the generous islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence.[32]

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why do you speak so faintly?
Are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again:
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin[33] is too little;

[*He puts the handkerchief from him; and she drops it.*

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I'm very sorry that you are not well.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO *and* DESDEMONA.

Emil. I am glad I have found this napkin.
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred[34] times

[32] *Wait for* or *await* your *coming*. See *Twelfth Night*, page 104, note 16.

[33] *Napkin* and *handkerchief* were used interchangeably.

[34] *Hundred* for an indefinite number; still it shows that the unity of time is much less observed in this play than some have supposed. Thus far, indeed, only one night, since that of the marriage, has been *expressly* accounted for; and this was the night when the nuptials were celebrated, and Cassio cashiered; though several must have passed during the sea-voyage. From Iago's soliloquy at the close of Act i., it is clear he had his plot even then so far matured, that he might often woo his wife to steal the handkerchief while at sea. Moreover, we may well enough suppose a considerable interval of time between the first and third scenes of the present Act; since Cassio may not have had the interview with Desdemona immediately after he engaged Emilia to solicit it for him. In truth, however, the reckoning of time all through follows the laws of poetry, and laughs at the chronologists. Wilson ("Kit North") observes, not more shrewdly than justly, that Shakespeare has two clocks; one, of the understanding, another, of the imagination. The former goes by the measures of sense; the latter, by the measure of ideas. If we insist on having the two clocks harmonize and

Woo'd me to steal't; but she so loves the token, —
For he conjured her she should ever keep it, —
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,[35]
And give't Iago:
What he will do with it Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

Re-enter IAGO.

Iago. How now! what do you here alone?

Emil. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me! It is a common thing —

Emil. Ha!

Iago. — to have a foolish wife.

Emil. O, is that all? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?

Iago. What handkerchief?

Emil. What handkerchief!
Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stol'n it from her?

Emil. No, faith; she let it drop by negligence,
And, to th' advantage,[36] I, being here, took't up.

tally together, we shall run into manifold contradictions and absurdities. But the imagination has its own laws; and in works of imagination, especially in the Drama, those laws are paramount. Nevertheless, if rightly followed, as Shakespeare commonly follows them, they do not clash with the laws of sensation, but simply range beside or above them; and will carry us smoothly along, unless we choose to stick in the others; as people who know too much often do.

[35] *Ta'en out* is *copied*. Her first thought is to have a copy made for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona; but the sudden coming of Iago, in a surly humour, makes her alter her resolution.

[36] That is, "I being here just at the nick of time, or pat upon the *opportunity*." *Advantage* is so used repeatedly in this play. See page 76, note 41.

Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with't, that you've been so earnest
To have me filch it?

Iago. Why, what's that to you?

[*Snatching it.*

Emil. If't be not for some purpose of impórt,
Give't me again: poor lady, she'll run mad
When she shall lack it.

Iago. Be not acknown on't;[37] I have use for it.
Go, leave me. — [*Exit* EMILIA.
I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of Holy Writ: this may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison:
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so:
Look, where he comes![38] — Not poppy, nor mandragora,[39]

[37] "Do not *acknowledge* you have seen it." The word occurs in Harrington's *Life of Ariosto*, 1607: "Some say he was married to her privilie but durst not be *acknown* of it."

[38] In "I did say so," Iago refers to what he has just said, that dangerous *conceptions* or imaginations have in them an inflaming virus, which, by working a little in the blood, sets it all on fire, and fills the mind with sleepless perturbation. Then, the moment his eye lights on Othello, he sees that his devilish insight of things was punctually prophetic of Othello's case; that his words are exactly verified in the inflamed looks of his victim.

[39] The mandrake, which was often called *mandragora*, is highly soporific, and was formerly used when a powerful opiate was wanted. See *Antony and Cleopatra*, page 58, note L.

Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Oth. Ha! ha! false to me?

Iago. Why, how now, general! no more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:
I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know't a little.

Iago. How now, my lord!

Oth. What sense had I of her stol'n hours?
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me;
I slept the next night well, was free and merry:
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I'm sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy,
So I had nothing known. O, now, for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumèd troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell![40]
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,[41]

[40] There is some resemblance between this speech and the following lines in Peele's "Farewell to the Famous and Fortunate Generals of our English Forces," 1589:

> And let god Mars his trumpet make you mirth,
> The *roaring cannon*, and the brazen trumpe,
> The *angry-sounding drum*, the *whistling fife*,
> The shriekes of men, the princelie *courser's ney*.

[41] In mentioning the *fife* joined to the *drum*, Shakespeare, as usual, paints from life; those instruments being used together in his age by the English soldiery. The *fife*, however, was discontinued for many years, but at length

The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

Iago. Is't possible, my lord?

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a wanton,
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;
Or, by the worth of man's eternal[42] soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!

Iago. Is't come to this?

Oth. Make me to see't; or, at the least, so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!

Iago. My noble lord, —

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;[43]
On horror's head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make Heaven weep, all Earth amazed;
For nothing canst thou to damnation add
Greater than that.

revived by the British guards under the Duke of Cumberland, at Maestricht in 1747, and thence adopted into other English regiments.

[42] *Eternal* is repeatedly used by the Poet for *immortal*. — The next line, "Thou hadst been better have been born," is something of a puzzle in grammar, though clear enough in sense.

[43] *Remorse*, in Shakespeare, usually means *pity* or *compassion*: here, as also again near the end of this scene, it stands, apparently, for *conscience*; the sense of the passage being, "Cast off, spurn away the restraints and regards of conscience altogether, and plunge headlong into all sorts of lawless, remorseless, and inhuman atrocities." The sense of *pity*, however, is included and interfused with the other. What an appalling disclosure the speech is, of Othello's excruciating agony of mind!

Iago. O grace! O Heaven forgive me!
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?
God b' wi' you! take mine office. — O wretched fool,
That livest to make thine honesty a vice! —
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest is not safe. —
I thank you for this profit; and from hence
I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.
Oth. Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.
Iago. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.
Oth. By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not:
I'll have some proof: her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!
Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?
Oth. Would! nay, I will.
Iago. And may; but how? how satisfied, my lord?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
If imputation and strong circumstances [44] —
Which lead directly to the door of truth —
Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

[44] "Imputation and strong circumstances" is equivalent to "opinion or inference based upon strong circumstantial evidence." This use of *and* in coupling a principal and an auxiliary notion is quite frequent. See *Hamlet* page 50, note 22.

Oth. Give me a living reason [45] she's disloyal.
Iago. I do not like the office:
But, sith I'm enter'd in this cause so far, —
Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love, —
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep. There are a kind of men
So loose of soul, that in their sleeps will mutter
Of their affairs: one of this kind is Cassio.
In sleep I heard him say, *Sweet Desdemona,*
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves; and then
Cried *Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moor!*
Oth. O monstrous! monstrous!
Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.
Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion: [46]
'Tis a shrewd doubt,[47] though it be but a dream.
Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.
Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.
Iago. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done; [48]
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this:
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

[45] "A *living* reason" is a reason drawn from life; that is, founded on fact and experience, not on conjecture or surmise.

[46] *Conclusion* is the old word for *experiment*. So that "a foregone conclusion" is an antecedent *experience*. See *Hamlet*, page 166, note 36.

[47] A *shrewd doubt* is a *well-aimed suspicion*. Here, by a common figure of speech, the effect is put for the cause. This use of *doubt* occurs quite often.

[48] An oblique sarcasm, referring to Othello's demand for "ocular proof." Iago is exulting in his intellectual mastery as shown in the success of his lies. Truth prevails by her own might; lies, by the skill of the liar: hence gaining his ends by falsehood is to Iago just the sweetest thing in the world.

Oth. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.
Iago. I know not that: but such a handkerchief —
I'm sure it was your wife's — did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.
Oth. If it be that, —
Iago. If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.
Oth. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to Heaven:
'Tis gone. —
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow Hell![49]
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues![50]
Iago. Yet be content.
Oth. O, blood, blood, blood!
Iago. Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.
Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellspont;[51]
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,

[49] Readers of Milton will be apt to remember, "He call'd so loud, that all the *hollow* deep of *Hell* resounded"; and, "The universal host sent up a shout that tore *Hell's concave*."

[50] *Fraught* is but an old form of *freight*. — Shakespeare has several allusions to the poisonous mouth of that ancient beast, the asp of Nile; and the catastrophe of *Antony and Cleopatra* is made to turn on its deadly bite.

[51] Pliny's *Natural History*, Holland's translation, 1601, may have furnished this illustration: "And the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis, but the sea never retireth backe again within Pontus."

Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable [52] and wide revenge
Swallow them up. — Now, by yond marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [*Kneels.*
I here engage my words.

Iago. Do not rise yet. — [*Kneels.*
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
You elements that clip us round about, —
Witness that here Iago doth give up
The execution [53] of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse, [54]
What bloody work soe'er. [*They rise.*

Oth. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead; 'tis done at your request:
But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own for ever. [*Exeunt.*

[52] *Capable* is here used for *capacious, comprehensive.* So Nash, in his *Pierce Pennilesse*, 1592: "Then belike, quoth I, you make this word *Dæmon* a *capable* name, of gods, of men, of devils."

[53] *Execution* for *exercise, employment*, or *executive power.*

[54] *Remorse* for *conscience*, simply. Iago has before said, "I hold it very stuff o' the conscience to do not contrived murder." So the meaning here is, "Let him command whatever bloody work he may, to perform it shall be with me a matter of conscience." This explanation is Mr. Joseph Crosby's. See *Julius Cæsar*, page 73, note 7.

SCENE IV. — *Before the Castle.*

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Clown.

Des. Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

Clo. I dare not say he lies anywhere.

Des. Why, man?

Clo. He's a soldier; and for one to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to: where lodges he?

Clo. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

Des. Can any thing be made of this?

Clo. I know not where he lodges; and for me to devise a lodging, and say he lies here or he lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

Des. Can you inquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.

Des. Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I have moved my lord on his behalf, and hope all will be well.

Clo. To do this is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [*Exit.*

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emil. I know not,[1] madam.

[1] Objection has been made to the conduct of Emilia in this scene, as inconsistent with the spirit she afterwards shows. I can discover no such inconsistency. Want of principle and strength of attachment are often thus seen united. Emilia loves her mistress deeply; but she has no *moral* repugnance to theft and falsehood, apprehends no *fatal* consequences from the Moor's passion, and has no soul to conceive the agony her mistress must suffer by the charge of infidelity: and it is but natural, that when the result comes she should be the more spirited for the very remembrance of her own guilty part in the process.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crusadoes: [2] and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.
Emil. Is he not jealous?
Des. Who, he? I think the Sun where he was born
Drew all such humours from him.
Emil. Look, here he comes.
Des. I will not leave him now till Cassio
Be call'd to him. —

Enter OTHELLO.

How is't with you, my lord?
Oth. Well, my good lady. — [*Aside.*] O, hardness to dissemble! —
How do you, Desdemona?
Des. Well, my good lord.
Oth. Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady.
Des. It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.
Oth. This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist! this hand of yours requires
A séquester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.
Des. You may, indeed, say so;

[2] It appears from Rider's *Dictionary* that there were three sorts of crusadoes; one with a long cross, one with a short cross, and the great crusado of Portugal. They were of gold, and differed in value from six shillings and eightpence to nine shillings.

For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.[3]

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck?

Des. I've sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

Oth. That is a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer,[4] and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
Entirely to her love; but, if she lost it,
Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathèd, and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;

[3] This "new heraldry" seems to be an allusion to the *bloody hand* borne on the arms of the new order of baronets, created by James I. in 1611. Malone quotes, in illustration of the text, the following from the *Essays* of Sir William Cornwallis, 1601: "We of these later times, full of a nice curiositie, mislike all the performances of our *forefathers;* we say they were honest plaine men, but they want the capering wits of this ripe age. *They had wont to give their hands and hearts together, but we think it a finer grace to looke asquint, our hand looking one way and our heart another.*"

[4] A *charmer* is used for an *enchanter* in the Psalms. So in Perkin's *Discourse on Witchcraft*, 1610: "By witches we understand not only those which kill and torment, but all *charmers*, jugglers, all wizards, commonly called wise men and wise women."

And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her.[5] I did so: and take heed on't;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose't or give't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.

Des. Is't possible?

Oth. 'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it.
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The Sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy[6] which the skilful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

Des. Indeed! is't true?

Oth. Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

Des. Then would to God that I had never seen't!

Oth. Ha! wherefore?

Des. Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

Oth. Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

Des. Heaven bless us!

Oth. Say you?

Des. It is not lost; but what an if it were?

Oth. How!

Des. I say, it is not lost.

[5] *Her* refers to the noun implied in *wive*. In the last scene of the play Othello speaks of the handkerchief as "an antique token my father gave my mother." This has been thought an oversight; Steevens regards it as a fresh proof of the Poet's art. "The first account," says he, "was purposely ostentatious, in order to alarm his wife the more. When he again mentions it, the truth was sufficient."

[6] The balsamic liquor running from *mummies* was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptic virtues. It was much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that threw a warmth into the shadows of a picture.

Oth. Fetch't, let me see't.
Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit:
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.
Oth. Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.
Des. Come, come;
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.
Oth. The handkerchief!
Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.
Oth. The handkerchief!
Des. A man that all his time
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,
Shared dangers with you,—
Oth. The handkerchief!
Des. In sooth, you are to blame.
Oth. Away! [*Exit.*
Emil. Is not this man jealous?
Des. I ne'er saw this before.
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I'm most unhappy in the loss of it.
Emil. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:
They're all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and, when they're full,
They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband!

Enter CASSIO *and* IAGO.

Iago. There is no other way; 'tis she must do't:
And, lo, the happiness![7] go, and impórtune her.
Des. How now, good Cassio! what's the news with you?
Cas. Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you

[7] *Happiness*, here, is *good hap* or *lucky chance;* referring to the timely and opportune meeting with Desdemona.

That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd.
If my offence be of such mortal kind
That nor my service past, nor present sorrow,
Nor purposed merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit;
So shall I clothe me in a forced content,
And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.[8]

Des. Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!
My advocation is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best,
And stood within the blank[9] of his displeasure
For my free speech! You must awhile be patient:
What I can do I will; and more I will
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry?

Emil. He went hence but now,
And certainly in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,

[8] Probably meaning, "content myself with, settle my mind upon, or bound my thoughts within, some other way and means of living, such as charitable fortune opens or offers to the needy."

[9] The *blank* is the *white* spot of a mark, at which the shots are aimed. So that to stand *within the blank* is to stand directly before the aim.

And, like the Devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother; and can he be angry?
Something of moment, then: I will go meet him
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

Des. I pr'ythee, do so. — [*Exit* IAGO.
Something, sure, of State —
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice [10]
Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him —
Hath puddled his clear spirit; [11] and in such cases
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
For let our finger ache, and it indues
Our other healthful members even to that sense
Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,
Nor of them look for such observancy [12]
As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was — unhandsome warrior as I am —
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indicted falsely.

Emil. Pray Heaven it be State-matters, as you think,
And no conception nor no jealous toy [13]
Concerning you.

Des. Alas the day, I never gave him cause!

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;

[10] That is, some *hidden plot, conspiracy*, or *machination*. Such is often the meaning of *practice*. See *King Lear*, page 202, note 23.

[11] *Puddled* with the exact meaning of our old Yankee word *riled*.

[12] *Observancy*, here, is watchful, tender, and devout attention or compliance. So in *As You Like It*, v. 2, where Silvius describes "what 'tis to love": "It is to be all adoration, duty, and *observance*, all humbleness," &c.

[13] *Toy* for *whim, fancy*, or *crotchet*, such as are apt to haunt and fascinate suspicious heads. See *King Richard III.*, page 48, note 13.

They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they're jealous: 'tis a monster
Begot upon itself, born on[14] itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

Emil. Lady, amen!

Des. I will go seek him. — Cassio, walk hereabout:
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
And seek t' effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA *and* EMILIA.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you, friend Cassio!

Cas. What makes you from home?[15]
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What, keep a week away?[16] seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!

Cas. Pardon me, Bianca:
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
But I shall, in a more continuate time,[17]
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,

[14] *On* where we should use *of*. Frequent.

[15] "What *are you doing away* from home?" See page 59, note 12.

[16] It would seem, by this, that seven days at least have elapsed since Cassio was cashiered; perhaps much more, as the "leaden thoughts" may have been kept off for some time by the hopes built upon Desdemona's promise of intercession, and brought on again by the unexpected delay.

[17] "*Continuate* time" is time *uninterrupted*.

Take me this work out.[18]

[*Giving her* DESDEMONA'S *handkerchief.*

Bian. O Cassio, whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend:
To the felt absence now I feel a cause.
Is't come to this? Well, well.

Cas. Go to, woman!
Throw your vile guesses in the Devil's teeth,
From whence you have them. You are jealous now
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:
No, in good troth, Bianca.

Bian. Why, whose is it?

Cas. I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.
I like the work well: ere it be demanded, —
As like enough it will, — I'd have it copied:
Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

Bian. Leave you! wherefore?

Cas. I do attend here on the general;
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.

Bian. Why, I pray you?

Cas. Not that I love you not.

Bian. But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me[19] on the way a little;
And say if I shall see you soon at[20] night.

Cas. 'Tis but a little way that I can bring you;

[18] Copy this work in another handkerchief. So in Middleton's *Women beware Women:* "She intends *to take out* other works in a new sampler." Again in the preface to Holland's Pliny, 1601: "Nicophanes gave his mind wholly to antique pictures, partly to exemplify and *take out* patterns."

[19] "*Bring* me" is *attend* or *escort* me; go with me. Often so.

[20] *Soon at* is here equivalent to *about.* See *Merchant*, page 114. note 1.

For I attend here: but I'll see you soon.

Bian. 'Tis very good; I must be circumstanced.[21] [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *Cyprus. Before the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO *and* IAGO.

Iago. Will you think so?[1]

Oth. Think so, Iago!

Iago. What, to kiss in private?

Oth. An unauthorized kiss.

Iago. It is a venial slip.
But, if I give my wife a handkerchief, —

Oth. What then?

Iago. Why, then 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

Oth. She is protectress of her honour too:
May she give that?

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen;
They have it very oft that have it not.
But, for the handkerchief, —

Oth. By Heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it!
Thou said'st, — O, it comes o'er my memory,

[21] Probably meaning "I must yield or submit to circumstances."

[1] We must suppose that Iago has been applying cases of false comfort to Othello; as that, though the parties had been even found kissing, still there might be nothing wrong between them. Such feigned apologies are, as he well knows, just the things to heighten the agony which he pretends to soothe.

As doth the raven o'er th' infected house,[2]
Boding to all, — he had my handkerchief.
Iago. Ay, what of that?
Oth. That's not so good now.
Iago. What,
If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say, — as knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convincèd or supplied them,[3] cannot choose
But they must blab —
Oth. Hath he said any thing?
Iago. He hath, my lord; but, be you well assured,
No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. Handkerchief — confessions — handkerchief! — To confess, and be hang'd for his labour; — first, to be hang'd, and then to confess. — I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction.[4] It is not words that shake me thus. — Pish!

[2] The raven was thought to be an ill-boding bird, and as such to haunt houses infected with the plague. See *Macbeth*, page 68, note 5.

[3] Having either *conquered* her reluctance or complied with her wish. The proper meaning of *convince* is *conquer* or *overcome*.

[4] This passage is exceedingly obscure, and has called forth, as well it might, a good deal of explanatory comment. It is to be noted that Othello is here in the first stages of the apoplectic fit which presently follows. The fit begins with a strange sensation, coming he knows not how or whence; such a sensation as he has never had before. He adds, "It is not words that shake me thus"; meaning, apparently, that the feeling he now has cannot be the effect of any audible or conscious communication, but must spring from depths in his being which consciousness cannot reach. Of the explanations that have been offered, I therefore, on the whole, prefer Heath's, which is in substance as follows: Othello feels all his faculties suddenly failing him, and a cloudy darkness stealing fast upon him. This suggests to him that his very nature, at her inmost seats where conscious-

noses, ears, and lips. — Is't possible? — Confess — handkerchief! — O devil![5] [*Falls in a trance.*

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach. — What, ho! my lord!
My lord, I say! Othello! —

Enter CASSIO.

How now, Cassio!

Cas. What's the matter?

Iago. My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy:
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago. No, forbear;
The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth, and by-and-by
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:
Do you withdraw yourself a little while;

ness cannot penetrate, must have been visited by some secret, mysterious touch, some preternatural assurance of the truth and reality of that which so oppresses him; otherwise she (his nature) could not share so deeply in his present agony, and thus be made to invest herself with the horrid darkness which is now overwhelming him. — It appears that *apoplexy* and *epilepsy* and their derivatives were sometimes used indiscriminately. Iago says, a little after, that Othello had a fit "yesterday"; but this is no doubt one of Iago's lies. So, in *2 King Henry the Fourth*, iv. 4, it is said of the King, "This *apoplex* will certain be his end." The disease was *epilepsy*.

[5] "The starts," says Warburton, "and broken reflections in this speech have something in them very terrible, and show the mind of the speaker to be in inexpressible agonies." — The trance is thus justified by Sir Joshua Reynolds: "Othello, in broken sentences and single words, all of which have a reference to the cause of his jealousy, shows that *all the proofs are present at once to his mind*, which so overpower it that he falls into a trance, — the natural consequence.

He will recover straight: when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you. — [*Exit* CASSIO.
How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?
Oth. Dost thou mock me?
Iago. I mock you! no, by Heaven.
Would you would bear your fortune like a man!
Oth. A hornèd man's a monster and a beast.
Iago. There's many a beast, then, in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.
Oth. Did he confess it?
Iago. Good sir, be a man;
Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you.
Oth. O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.
Iago. Stand you awhile apart;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.[6]
Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief, —
A passion most unfitting such a man, —
Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy;
Bade him anon return, and here speak with me;
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face;
For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
He hath, and is again to meet your wife:
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;
Or I shall say you're all-in-all one spleen,[7]

[6] "A patient list" is odd language, but means the *bounds* of *patience*. For this use of *list*, see *Twelfth Night*, page 85, note 14.

[7] Equivalent to *all made up of* spleen. The spleen appears to have been

And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago?
I will be found most cunning in my patience;
But — dost thou hear? — most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw? —

[OTHELLO *retires.*

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca.
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.
As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish jealousy must construe[8]
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour,
Quite in the wrong. —

Re-enter CASSIO.

How do you now, lieutenant?

Cas. The worser that you give me the addition
Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.
[*Speaking lower.*] Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
How quickly should you speed!

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff!

Oth. [*Aside.*] Look, how he laughs already!

Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

regarded as the special seat of the most vehement and tempestuous passions; those which in their movements resemble the action of lightning and gunpowder. See *A Midsummer*, page 29, note 17.

[8] Probably, as Walker says, *unbookish* is to be taken with *construe*. "So that his jealousy must *translate ignorantly*," &c.

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?

Oth. [*Aside.*] Now he impórtunes him
To tell it o'er: — go to; well said, well said.

Iago. She gives it out that you shall marry her:
Do you intend it?

Cas. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [*Aside.*] Do you triumph, Roman?[9] do you triumph?

Cas. I marry her! Pr'ythee, bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome.[10] Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [*Aside.*] So, so, so, so: they laugh that win.

Iago. Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Have you scored me?[11] Well.

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. [*Aside.*] Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me in every

[9] The Romans were a triumphant people, and were also fond of triumphs. So Cassio's seeming exultation probably suggests the name, and Othello calls him Roman ironically.

[10] *Unwholesome* in the sense of *unhealthy* or *diseased.* Repeatedly so.

[11] I am not clear as to the meaning of this. To *score* was to cut notches in a stick, and accounts were formerly kept by scoring the items thus in what were called tally-sticks. In *All's Well*, iv. 3, we have the line, "After he *scores*, he never *pays the score*"; and the context there shows the meaning to be, that when he has sworn a woman into granting his wish he never keeps his oaths; or what the Poet elsewhere calls "beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury." So, in the text, the meaning may be, "Have you run up an account against me, which I must pay? very well, I'll see you paid." Or it may be, "Have you squared the account with me for cashiering you?"

place. I was, the other day, talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and falls me thus about my neck; —

Oth. [*Aside.*] Crying *O dear Cassio!* as it were: his gesture imports it.

Cas. — so hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [*Aside.*] Now he tells how she pluck'd him to my chamber. — O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look, where she comes.

Cas. 'Tis such another fitchew![12] marry, a perfumed one. —

Enter BIANCA.

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian. Let the Devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There; give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

Oth. [*Aside.*] By Heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit.*

Iago. After her, after her.

[12] *Fitchew* is an old name of the *polecat.* — *Such another* was a common phrase, meaning *just like*, or nearly that.

Cas. Faith, I must; she'll rail in the street else.

Iago. Will you sup there?

Cas. Yes, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come; will you?

Iago. Go to; say no more. [*Exit* CASSIO.

Oth. [*Coming forward.*] How shall I murder him, Iago?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laugh'd at his vice?

Oth. O Iago!

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief?

Oth. Was that mine?

Iago. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it to him, and he hath given it his mistress.

Oth. I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

Iago. Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damn'd to-night; for she shall not live: no, my heart is turn'd to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle! an admirable musician: O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand-thousand times. And then, of so gentle a condition![13]

[13] *Condition*, again, for *temper* or *disposition*. See page 91, note 29.

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend;[14] for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes! Get me some poison, Iago; this night; — I'll not expostulate with her, lest her beauty unprovide my mind again; — this night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison; strangle her in her bed.

Oth. Good, good! the justice of it pleases; very good!

Iago. And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker:[15] you shall hear more by midnight.

Oth. Excellent-good! [*A trumpet within.*] What trumpet is that same?

Iago. Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico Come from the Duke; and, see, your wife is with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, *and* Attendants.

Lod. God save the worthy general!

Oth. With all my heart, sir.

Lod. The Duke and Senators of Venice greet you.

[*Gives him a packet.*

Oth. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[*Opens the packet, and reads.*

Des. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signior: welcome to Cyprus.

Lod. I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

[14] A *patent* is an open letter conferring a special right or privilege; as in the common phrase, *patent-right*. See *Richard II.*, page 76, note 26.

[15] "I will *undertake*, or *take upon me*, your cause against him." The word was used of those who volunteer in other men's quarrels.

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord
An unkind breach; but you shall make all well.

Oth. Are you sure of that?

Des. My lord?

Oth. [Reads.] *This fail you not to do, as you will*—

Lod. He did not call; he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

Des. A most unhappy one: I would do much
T' atone them,[16] for the love I bear to Cassio.

Oth. Fire and brimstone!

Des. My lord?

Oth. Are you wise?

Des. What, is he angry?

Lod. May be the letter moved him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

Des. Trust me, I am glad on't.

Oth. Indeed!

Des. My lord?

Oth. I am glad to see you mad.

Des. Why, sweet Othello!

Oth. [*Striking her.*] Devil!

Des. I have not deserved this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw't: 'tis very much:
Make her amends; she weeps.

Oth. O devil, devil!
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.[17] —

[16] *Atone* in its old sense of *reconcile* or *at-one*. Repeatedly so.

[17] Here, as often, *falls* is a transitive verb, equivalent to *lets fall*. — By the

Out of my sight!

Des. I will not stay t' offend you. [*Going.*

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady:
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress!

Des. My lord?

Oth. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn.
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,
Very obedient. — Proceed you in your tears. —
Concerning this, sir, — O well-painted [18] passion! —
I am commanded home. — Get you away;
I'll send for you anon. — Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice. — Hence, avaunt! —

[*Exit* DESDEMONA.

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, to-night
I do entreat that we may sup together:
You're welcome, sir, to Cyprus. — Goats and monkeys!

[*Exit.*

Lod. Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate

doctrine of equivocal generation new animals were supposed producible by new combinations of matter. Shakespeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts which make the crocodile the most deceitful of animals. "It is written that he will weep over a man's head when he hath devoured the body, and will then eat up the head too." Wherefore in Latin there is a proverb, "Crocodili lachrymæ, crocodiles teares, to signifie such teares as are feigned, and spent only with intent to deceive or do harm." — BULLOKAR'S *Expositor*, 1616.

[18] *Painted* for *counterfeited* or *simulated*. Conversely, we have, elsewhere, *counterfeit* for *picture*, or what is painted.

Call all-in-all sufficient? Is this the nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze nor pierce?

Iago. He is much changed.

Lod. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

Iago. He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure
What he might be, — if what he might he is not, —
I would to Heaven he were!

Lod. What, strike his wife!

Iago. Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew
That stroke would prove the worst!

Lod. Is it his use?
Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault?

Iago. Alas, alas!
It is not honesty [19] in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him;
And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech: do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lod. I'm sorry that I am deceived in him. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II. — *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO *and* EMILIA.

Oth. You have seen nothing, then?

Emil. Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

Oth. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together

[19] *Honesty*, as also *honest*, was sometimes used in the exact sense of *honourable*. And such is clearly the meaning here. See, also, v. 2, note 17, of this play, for instance of a like usage.

Emil. But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.
Oth. What, did they never whisper?
Emil. Never, my lord.
Oth. Nor send you out o' the way?
Emil. Never.
Oth. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?
Emil. Never, my lord.
Oth. That's strange.
Emil. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let Heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.
Oth. Bid her come hither; go. — [*Exit* EMILIA.
She says enough; yet she's a simple wench
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle wanton,
A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets:
And yet she'll kneel and pray; I've seen her do't.

Enter DESDEMONA *with* EMILIA.

Des. My lord, what is your will?
Oth. Pray, chuck, come hither,
Des. What is your pleasure?
Oth. Let me see your eyes;
Look in my face.
Des. What horrible fancy's this?
Oth. [*To* EMILIA.] Some of your function, mistress; shut the door;

Cough, or cry *hem*, if anybody come:
Your mystery, your mystery; nay, dispatch.[1] [*Exit* EMILIA.
Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.
Oth. Why, what art thou?
Des. Your wife, my lord; your true
And loyal wife.
Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself;
Lest, being like one of Heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double-damn'd;
Swear thou art honest.[2]
Des. Heaven doth truly know it.
Oth. Heaven truly knows that thou art false as Hell.
Des. To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?
Oth. Ah, Desdemon! away! away! away!
Des. Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?
Am I the motive[3] of these tears, my lord?
If haply you my father do suspect
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me: if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.
Oth. Had it pleased Heaven
To try me with affliction; had He rain'd
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;

[1] As in mere wantonness of self-torture, Othello here fondles the most agonizing conceptions, and seeks a morbid relief in thinking of Emilia as doing the office or mystery of a procuress. A master-stroke of delineation.

[2] That is, by adding the crime of perjury to that of adultery: "Accumulate sin upon sin, lest, being like an angel, you so strike the fiends with awe that they will not dare to touch you."

[3] Shakespeare uses *motive* repeatedly in the sense of *cause* or *mover*.

Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some place of my soul
A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me
A fixèd figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at![4]
Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life,—
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in!—turn thy complexion there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,
Ay, there, look grim as Hell!

Des. I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write *wanton* on? What committed!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!

[4] Much has been written upon this celebrated passage, which has been thought to be very obscure, if not absurdly at odds with itself; but it seems to me all right. "The time of scorn" means, I think, the *age* of scorn, that is, the whole period during which scorn may be said to live. The "fixed figure" is simply the speaker himself. As to "slow unmoving," the sense of it can be better felt than expressed: we can see the sneer darting from the inexorable finger, ever slowly moving *with* the object, never moving *from* it.

Heaven stops the nose at it, and the Moon winks;
The vulgar wind, that kisses all it meets,
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it. What committed!
Impudent wanton!

Des. By Heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth. Are not you a wanton?

Des. No, as I am a Christian:
If to preserve this vessel for my lord,
Be not to be a wanton, I am none.

Oth. Is't possible?

Des. O, Heaven forgive us!

Oth. I cry you mercy,[5] then:
I took you for that cunning trull of Venice
That married with Othello. — You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,[6]
And keep the gate of Hell!

Re-enter EMILIA.

You, you, ay, you!
We've done our talk; there's money for your pains:[7]
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*

[5] "I cry you mercy" is an old phrase for "I ask your pardon."

[6] The office *opposed* to Saint Peter; alluding, evidently, to "the power of the keys," which was given to the Apostles generally, and especially to Saint Peter as representing them; so that the opposition is between Emilia as keeper of the gate of Hell, and Saint Peter as keeper of the gate of Heaven. The sense, therefore, requires that the special emphasis, if there be any, should be laid on *opposite*.

[7] Othello, who in his relations towards women is one of the most delicate and sensitive of men, in the bitterness of his soul *pays* his wife's own maid as he leaves the former's bed-chamber; not either to reward or to offend Emilia, but that he may torment his own soul by carrying out his supposition to its most revolting consequences. — WHITE.

Emil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?
How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?
Des. Faith, half asleep.
Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?
Des. With who?
Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.
Des. Who is thy lord?
Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.
Des. I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,
But what should go by water.[8] Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;
And call thy husband hither.
Emil. Here's a change indeed! [*Exit.*
Des. 'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse?[9]

Re-enter EMILIA *with* IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? How is't with you?
Des. I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.
Iago. What's the matter, lady?
Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so defamed her,

[8] *Go by water* means, of course, *be expressed by tears.* Surely a conceit quite out of place. Laertes, in *Hamlet*, iv. 4, vents a similar one on learning that his sister is drowned: "Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia, and therefore I forbid my tears."

[9] A very harsh and awkward expression; but meaning, "What have I been doing, that upon my worst act he should fasten the slightest imputation of crime?"

Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear: a beggar in his drink
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.[10]

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I do not know.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

Emil. Hath she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be thus wrong'd? would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago. Beshrew him for't!
How comes this trick upon him?

Des. Nay, Heaven doth know

Emil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal[11] villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

Iago. Fie, there's no such man; 'tis impossible.

Des. If any such there be, Heaven pardon him!

Emil. A halter pardon him! and Hell gnaw his bones!
The Moor's abused by some most villainous knave,
Some base notorious[12] knave, some scurvy fellow. —
O Heaven, that such companions[13] Thou'dst unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from the East to th' West!

[10] *Callet* seems to have been used for *vixen* or *scold*. So in *The Winter's Tale*: "A *callet* of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband, and now baits me."

[11] *Eternal*, apparently, for *infernal*. See *Julius Cæsar*, page 53, note 40.

[12] *Notorious* seems to be here put for *outrageous*. Or it may mean *deserving to be noted*, or branded with infamy.

[13] *Companion* was often used in scorn, just as *fellow* is now.

Iago. Speak within door.[14]

Emil. O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was
That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool; go to.

Des. Alas, Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse, or thought, or actual deed;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will — though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement — love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love.

Iago. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour:
The business of the State does him offence,
And he does chide with you.[15]

Des. If 'twere no other, —

Iago. 'Tis but so, I warrant. [*Trumpets within.*
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!
The messengers of Venice stay the meat:
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well. —

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA *and* EMILIA.

[14] Do not clamour so as to be heard beyond the house.

[15] This was the phraseology of the time. "To complaine, to *make a quarrel*, to *chide with* one for a thing. Expostulare et queri." — BARET. So in the Poet's 111th *Sonnet*: "O, for my sake do you *with* fortune *chide*."

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo!

Rod. I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary?

Rod. Every day thou daff'st[16] me with some device, Iago; and rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st from me all conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure it; nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffer'd.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Rod. Faith, I have heard too much; for your words and performances are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me she hath received them, and return'd me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance; but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fopp'd[17] in it.

Iago. Very well.

[16] *Daff* is but another form of *doff*, and means to *do off* or *put off*. Shakespeare uses the word in both forms. See *Much Ado*, page 63, note 9.

[17] The word *fopped* does not occur again in Shakespeare, nor do I remember to have met with it elsewhere. Probably it means *made a fool of*. Cowley, in his *Cutter of Coleman Street* 1633, uses *foppity* for *simpleton*: "Why does this little *foppitee* laugh always? 'tis such a ninny, that she betrays her mistris, and thinks she does no hurt at all, no, not she."

Rod. I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod. Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even from this instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod. It hath not appear'd.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appear'd; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment.[18] But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, — I mean purpose, courage, and valour, — this night show it: if thou the next night following meet not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no: he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona,[19] unless his abode be linger'd

[18] Shakespeare knew well, that most men like to be flattered on account of those endowments in which they are most deficient. Hence Iago's compliment to this *snipe* on his sagacity and shrewdness. — MALONE.

[19] This passage proves, so far as any thing said by Iago may be believed, that Othello was not meant to be a Negro, as has been represented, both on

here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean, removing of him?

Iago. Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place, knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me to do?

Iago. Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his honourable fortune. If you will watch his going thence, — which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one, — you may take him at your pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it,[20] but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste: about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

the stage and off, but a veritable Moor. His kindred, the Mauritanians, — from whose "men of royal siege he fetched his life and being," and among whom he was about to retire, — though apt enough to be confounded with the Negroes, were as different from them, externally, as brown is from black; internally, in mind and character, the difference was far greater.

[20] *Amazed*, in its primitive sense of being *in a maze*; that is, *bewildered* or *perplexed*. Such is the more common meaning of the word in Shakespeare.

Lod. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your Honour is most welcome.

Oth. Will you walk, sir? — O, Desdemona, —

Des. My lord?

Oth. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be return'd forthwith: dismiss your attendant there; look't be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO, LODOVICO, *and* Attendants.

Emil. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.[1]

Des. He says he will return incontinent:[2]
He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bade me to dismiss you.

Emil. Dismiss me!

Des. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:
We must not now displease him.

Emil. I would you had never seen him!

Des. So would not I: my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubborness, his checks, his frowns, —
Pr'ythee, unpin me, — have grace and favour in them.

Emil. I've laid those sheets you bade me on the bed,

Des. All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!
If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

Emil. Come, come, you talk.

Des. My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad,[3]

[1] One of those side intimations of the fluctuations of passion, which we seldom meet with but in Shakespeare. He has here put into half a line what some authors would have spun out into ten set speeches. — HAZLITT.

[2] *Incontinent* for *incontinently*, and in its old sense of *immediately* or *forthwith*. See *As You Like It*, page 126, note 3.

[3] Probably meaning mad in the sense of *crazy*; perhaps, of *fickle*.

And did forsake her: she had a song of *willow;*
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it. That song to-night
Will not go from my mind; I've much to-do,[4]
Not to go hang my head all at one side,
And sing it like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, dispatch.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

Des. No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper[5] man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des. He speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice would have walk'd barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

Des. [Sings.]

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow:
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones; —

Lay by these; —

[Sings.] *Sing willow, willow, willow;* —

Pr'ythee, hie thee; he'll come anon: —

[Sings.] *Sing all a green willow must be my garland.*
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve, —

Nay, that's not next. Hark! who is't that knocks?

[4] ***To-do***, again, for *ado*. See page 116, note 6.
[5] ***Proper***, as usual, for *handsome* or *fine-looking*.

Emil. It's the wind.

Des. [Sings.]

I call'd my love false love; but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow.[6] —

So, get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping?

Emil. 'Tis neither here nor there.

Des. I've heard it said so. O, these men, these men!
Dost thou in conscience think, — tell me, Emilia, —
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

[6] These lines are from an old ballad entitled "A Lover's Complaint, being forsaken of his Love." The ballad is given entire in Percy's *Religues*. It is there the lament of a man: Shakespeare adapted it to the sex of "poor Barbara." I subjoin the stanzas from which he borrowed:

A poore soule sat sighing under a sicamore tree;
O willow, willow, willow!
With his hand on his bosom, his head on his knee:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.

The cold streams ran by him, his eyes wept apace;
O willow, willow, willow!
The salt tears fell from him, which drowned his face:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.

The mute birds sat by him, made tame by his mones;
O willow, willow, willow!
The salt tears fell from him, which soften'd the stones:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.

Let nobody blame me, her scornes I do prove;
O willow, willow, willow!
She was borne to be faire; I to die for her love:
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garland.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. Why, would not you?

Des. No, by this heavenly light!

Emil. The world's a huge thing:

It is a great price for a small vice.

Des. In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

Emil. In troth, I think I should; and undo't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring,[7] nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition;[8] but, for the whole world, — why, I should venture Purgatory for't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for the whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and, having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

Des. I do not think there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen; and as many to the vantage[9] as would store the world they play'd for.

[7] A *joint-ring* was anciently a token of troth-plight between lovers, like the piece of broken gold in the *Bride of Lammermoor*. Dryden has a minute description of it in his *Don Sebastian:*

> A curious artist wrought them
> With joints so close as not to be perceived;
> Yet they are both each other's counterpart:
> Her part had Juan inscribed, and his had Zayda,
> (You know these names are theirs,) and in the midst
> A heart divided in two halves was placed.
> Now, if the rivets of those rings enclosed
> Fit not each other, I have forged this lie;
> But, if they join, you must for ever part.

[8] *Exhibition*, again, in its old sense of *allowance*. See page 73, note 27.

[9] *To the vantage* is the same as *to boot*, or *into the bargain*.

But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps;
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having [10] in despite;
Why, we have galls; and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense [11] like them: they see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

Des. Good night, good night: Heaven me such uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Cyprus. A Street.*

Enter IAGO *and* RODERIGO.

Iago. Here, stand behind this bulk; [1] straight will he come:
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home:
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow.
It makes us, or it mars us; think on that,

[10] *Having* for *allotment* or supply of money.

[11] *Sense* is here put for *feeling* or *sensation*, like the Latin *sensus*.

[1] *Bulk* is a kind of stall, board, or counter outside of a house, on which articles were set for sale. So Florio: "Balcone, *a bulke or stall of* a shop."

And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand: be bold, and take thy stand.

[*Retires to a little distance.*

Rod. I have no great devotion to the deed;
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons:
'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword! he dies.

[*Goes to his stand.*

Iago. I've rubb'd this young quat[2] almost to the sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd[3] from him,
As gifts to Desdemona;
It must not be: if Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril.
No, he must die: be't so; I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

Rod. I know his gait, 'tis he. — Villain, thou diest!

[*Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at* CASSIO.

Cas. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
But that my coat[4] is better than thou know'st:

[2] A *quat* was, in provincial usage, a *pimple*, which by rubbing is made to smart. Roderigo is so called for the same reason that a low fellow is sometimes called a *scab*. Rubbing to the *sense* is rubbing to the *quick*.

[3] *Fooled* him out of. To *bob* is to *cheat* or *swindle* by craft of tongue.

[4] Cassio wears, underneath his visible dress, a *coat* or *shirt of mail;* a hidden panoply made of finely-wrought links of steel, and sometimes called chain-armour.

I will make proof of thine. [*Draws, and wounds* RODERIGO.

Rod. O, I am slain!

[IAGO *rushes from his post, cuts* CASSIO *behind in the leg, and exit.*

Cas. I'm maim'd for ever!—Help, ho! murder! murder! [*Falls.*

Enter OTHELLO, *at some distance.*

Oth. The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am!

Oth. It is even so.

Cas. O, help, ho! light! a surgeon!

Oth. 'Tis he!—O brave Iago, honest and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!
Thou teachest me.—Minion, your dear lies dead,
And your unblest fate hies: wanton, I come!
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted. [*Exit.*

Enter LODOVICO *and* GRATIANO, *at some distance.*

Cas. What, ho! no watch? no passage?[5] murder! murder!

Gra. 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

Cas. O, help!

Lod. Hark!

Rod. O wretched villain!

Lod. Two or three groan. It is a heavy night.
These may be counterfeits: let's think't unsafe
To come in to the cry without more help.

Rod. Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.

Lod. Hark!

[5] Are there no *passengers?* none *passing by?* *Passenger* formerly means a passage-boat or vessel, and so would not have been understood in our sense. Of course London had many such boats plying across the Thames

Gra. Here one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

Re-enter IAGO, *with a light.*

Iago. Who's there? whose noise is this that cries on murder?[6]

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did not you hear a cry?

Cas. Here, here! for Heaven's sake, help me!

Iago. What's the matter?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same indeed; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here that cry so grievously?

Cas. Iago? O, I'm spoil'd, undone by villains!
Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

Cas. I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains!—
What are you there? come in, and give some help.

[*To* LODOVICO *and* GRATIANO.

Rod. O, help me here!

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave! O villain!

[*Stabs* RODERIGO.

Rod. O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!

Iago. Kill men i' the dark!—Where be these bloody thieves?—
How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!—
What may you be? are you of good or evil?

[6] That cries or *exclaims against* murder. To *cry on* and to *cry out on* are often so used by Shakespeare. See *Hamlet*, page 110, note 49.

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.
Iago. Signior Lodovico?
Lod. He, sir.
Iago. I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.
Gra. Cassio!
Iago. How is't, brother?
Cas. My leg is cut in two.
Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid!—
Light, gentlemen! I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho? who is't that cried?
Iago. Who is't that cried!
Bian. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!
Iago. O notable harlot! — Cassio, may you suspect
Who they should be that have thus mangled you?
Cas. No.
Gra. I'm sorry to find you thus: I've been to seek you.
Iago. Lend me a garter. — So. — O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!
Bian. Alas, he faints! — O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!
Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury. —
Patience awhile, good Cassio. — Come, come;
Lend me a light. — Know we this face or no?
Alas, my friend and my dear countryman
Roderigo! no? — yes, sure; O Heaven! Roderigo!
Gra. What, of Venice?
Iago. Even he, sir: did you know him?
Gra. Know him! ay.
Iago. Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;

These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I'm glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio? — O, a chair, a chair!

Gra. Roderigo!

Iago. He, he, 'tis he! — [*A chair brought in.*] O, that's well said;[7] the chair. —

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon. — [*To* BIANCA.] For you, mistress,
Save you your labour. — He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend: what malice was between you?

Cas. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

Iago. [*To* BIANCA.] What, look you pale? — O, bear him out o' the air. — [CASSIO *and* RODERIGO *are borne off.*

Stay you, good gentlemen. — Look you pale, mistress? —
Do you perceive the gastness[8] of her eye? —
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon. —
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:
Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,
Though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. 'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter, husband?

Iago. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scaped:
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

[7] *Well said* was a common phrase for *well done.*

[8] *Gastness* for *ghastliness*, the deadly paleness of terror. The sense of *ghost* lies at the bottom of it; as to be *ghosted* was a pretty frightful matter. The word does not occur again; but we have *gasted* in the same sense. See *King Lear*, page 98, note 8.

Emil. Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

Iago. This is the fruit of fooling. — Pr'ythee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night. —
[*To* BIANCA.] What, do you shake at that?

Bian. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

Iago. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

Emil. Fie, fie upon thee, harlot!

Bian. I am no harlot; but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.

Emil. As I! foh! fie upon thee!

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd. —
[*To* BIANCA.] Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale. —
Emilia, run you to the citadel,
And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd. —
Will you go on afore? — [*Aside.*] This is the night
That either makes me or fordoes [9] me quite. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *A Bedchamber in the Castle:* DESDEMONA *in bed asleep; a light burning.*

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause,[1] my soul, —

[9] To *fordo* is to *undo*, to *ruin*, or *destroy*. See *Lear*, page 208, note 31.

[1] Othello means that Desdemona's crime is the sole motive or reason that impels him to the present act; that in this alone he has a justifying cause, a "compelling occasion," for what he is about to do; so that he cannot justly lie under the reproach of having acted from any subjective or self-generated *animus* of revengeful jealousy. Webster has a like use of *cause* in the peroration of his great speech in reply to Calhoun, Feb. 16, 1833: "The cause, then, Sir, the cause! Let the world know the cause which has thus induced one State of the Union to bid defiance to the power of the whole." &c.

Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars![2] —
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, — and then put out thy light. —
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me; — but, once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling Nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It needs must wither: I'll smell it on the tree. —

[*Kissing her.*

O balmy breath, that does almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more:
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and that's the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love.[3] She wakes.

[2] Steevens urges that the Poet had no classical authority for "chaste stars." But, in classical poetry, the Moon is Diana, the goddess of *chastity*, and the stars are the train of *virgins* attending on her. And, if it were not so, Shakespeare had the authority of Nature, and so has made the phrase classical. The epithet *chaste* thus applied most aptly suggests the nature of the cause which the *purity* of the stars forbids to be named in their presence. No classical authority!

[3] The tears are cruel, because, while heart-wringing pity is streaming from the eyes, an overmastering strain of duty is forcing him to what is, objectively, an act of cruelty. And the very loveliness of the victim only works to intensify his purpose, lest love should usurp the crown that belongs to a higher passion, — a passion, too, that *must* wear the crown, else love itself will fall

Des. Who's there? Othello?

Oth. Ay, Desdemona.

Des. Will you come to bed, my lord?

Oth. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

Des. Ay, my lord.

Oth. If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to Heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alack, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No, — Heaven forfend! — I would not kill thy soul.

Des. Talk you of killing?

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then Heaven have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart!

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Hum!

Des. And yet I fear you; for you're fatal then
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They're loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:

from its propriety. Pathos carried to the most soul-searching height! And the "sorrow is heavenly," because it is baptized and washed into holiness by the sacred and divine regards of justice. I know not where else we have so fitting and lifelike an embodiment in act of Lovelace's immortal saying, "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more."

These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.
Oth. Peace, and be still!
Des. I will so. What's the matter?
Oth. That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee
Thou gavest to Cassio.
Des. No, by my life and soul!
Send for the man, and ask him.
Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou'rt on thy death-bed.
Des. Ay, but not yet to die.
Oth. Yes, presently:
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;
For to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.
Des. Then Lord have mercy on me!
Oth. I say, amen.
Des. And have you mercy too! I never did
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of Heaven
As I might love; I never gave him token.
Oth. By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,
And makest me call what I intend to do
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:[4]

[4] Some editors have managed to stumble at this passage. The language is indeed compressed, but the meaning seems clear enough. Othello goes about the killing of his wife as an act of religion, and he fears lest her perjury may excite his anger, and so corrupt the deed into an act of revenge. So Johnson's explanation: "Thou *hardenest* my heart, and makest me *kill thee with the rage of a murderer*, when I thought to have *sacrificed thee* to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.

I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it, then;
I never gave it him: send for him hither;
Let him confess a truth.

Oth. His mouth is stopp'd;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order[5] for't.

Des. O! my fear interprets: what, is he dead?

Oth. Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone!

Oth. Out, wanton! weep'st thou for him to my face?

Des. O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

Oth. Down, wanton!

Des. Kill me to-morrow; let me live to-night!

Oth. Nay, if you strive, —

Des. But half an hour!

Oth. Being done, there is no pause.[6]

Des. But while I say one prayer!

Oth. It is too late. [*Smothers her.*

Emil. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord, my lord!

Oth. What noise is this? — Not dead? not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain:
So, so.[7]

[5] In old language, to *take order* is to *adopt measures* or *make arrangements*. Shakespeare has the phrase repeatedly in that sense.

[6] Othello regards the act as *done*, when the conflict between his love and honour is fully over, his resolution finally taken, and his hand raised to strike. To admit any pause, were but to prolong the suffering of the victim.

[7] At these words, the Othello of the stage is made to stab Desdemona. There is no such direction in any of the old copies; but still the stage-custom may be right; as, in the agony of the moment, and in his desire "not to have

Emil. [*Within.*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!
Oth. Who's there?
Emil. [*Within.*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!
Oth. Yes; — 'tis Emilia; — by-and-by. — She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
The noise was high. Ha! no more moving? Still,
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were't good?
I think she stirs again: no. What's best to do?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of Sun and Moon, and that th' affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.
Emil. [*Within.*] I do beseech you
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!
Oth. I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia.
Soft! by-and-by. — Let me the curtains draw. —
Where art thou? [*Opens the door.*

Enter EMILIA.

What's the matter with thee now?
Emil. O, my good lord, yonder's foul murder done
Oth. What, now?
Emil. But now, my lord.
Oth. It is the very error of the Moon;[8]

her linger in her pain," Othello's resolution not to shed her blood might be overcome. It seems more natural, too, that Desdemona should speak after being stabbed, than after being smothered to death.

[8] Othello says this with a tone of sarcastic or ironical scorn: "It is the *mere wandering* or *ex-orbitancy* of the Moon." The seeming whims and caprices of the Moon, that is to say, her irregularities of movement, were

She comes more near the Earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian
Call'd Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd?

Emil. No, Cassio is not kill'd.

Oth. Not Cassio kill'd? then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

Emil. Alas, what cry is that?

Oth. That! what?

Emil. Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice. —
Help! help, ho! help! — O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

Des. A guiltless death I die.

Emil. O, who hath done
This deed?

Des. Nobody; I myself. Farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! [*Dies.*

Oth. Why, how should she be murder'd?

Emil. Alas, who knows?

Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so: I must needs report the truth.

Oth. She's, like a liar, gone to burning Hell:
'Twas I that kill'd her.

Emil. O, the more angel she,[9]

thought to make people *lunatic*. This use of *very* for *mere* occurs many times. See *King Henry the Fifth*, page 38, note 3.

[9] Emilia evidently means that Desdemona is the more an angel for having spoken the falsehood in question. And surely all well-ordered minds must agree with her: at all events, I, for one, cannot choose, but love and

And you the blacker devil!

Oth. She turn'd to folly, and she was a wanton.

Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Oth. She was false as water.

Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!

Oth. O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in Hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

Emil. My husband!

Oth. Thy husband.

Emil. That she was false to wedlock?

Oth. Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If Heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband!

Oth. Ay, 'twas he that told me first:
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emil. My husband!

Oth. What needs this iterance, woman? I say thy husband.

honour Desdemona the more for that lie. For, indeed, the sweet, dear sufferer knows that Othello is driven onward by some monstrous delusion; that some hideous inspiration has put him clean out of his native self; that he is sure to have the worst of it, and so is even more an object of compassion than herself; and the unspeakable agony legible in his features wrings her pure soul with a pity so intense, as to take from her all sense of the pangs of death: and so her last breath is hallowed with a tender yearning to shield him, as far as she possibly can, from the dreadful retributions which await him, both from without and from within, when the truth shall be known. So deep and sacred is the head and spring of Desdemona's dying falsehood! It is a lie born of the very holiness of truth itself!

Emil. O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love![10] —
My husband say that she was false!
Oth. He, woman;
I say thy husband: dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.
Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to th' heart:
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.
Oth. Ha!
Emil. Do thy worst:
This deed of thine is no more worthy Heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.
Oth. Peace, you were best.
Emil. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed —
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. — Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, *and* IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter? — How now, general!
Emil. O, are you come, Iago? you've done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.
Gra. What is the matter?
Emil. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false:
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

[10] That is, villainy has made a sport and mockery of love, by playing upon it, and beguiling it into a conflagration of its own home. Emilia probably refers to the heroine's friendly efforts in Cassio's behalf.

Iago. I told him what I thought; and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him she was false?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie; an odious, damnèd lie;
Upon my soul, a lie; a wicked lie!
She false with Cassio! did you say with Cassio?

Iago. With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm [11] your tongue.

Emil. I will not charm my tongue; I'm bound to speak:
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed, —

Mon. } O, Heavens forfend!
Gra. }

Emil. — And your reports have set the murder on.

Oth. Nay, stare not, masters: it is true, indeed.

Gra. 'Tis a strange truth.

Mon. O monstrous act!

Emil. Villainy, villainy, villainy!
I think upon't, I think, — I smell't; — O villainy! —
I thought so then; [12] — I'll kill myself for grief. —
O villainy, villainy!

Iago. What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak:
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now. —
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. O! O! O! [*Falling on the bed.*

Emil. Nay, lay thee down and roar;
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent

[11] To *charm* is to *hush* or *still* as with a *charm.* Pliny says that *favete linguis* was the constant exclamation before any *charm* was applied. From this circumstance the phrase to *charm* a tongue may have originated.

[12] That is, when she gave the handkerchief to Iago; for even *then* she appears to have suspected it was sought after for no honest purpose.

That e'er did lift up eye.

Oth. [*Rising.*] O, she was foul! —
I scarce did know you, uncle: there lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd:
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemon! I'm glad thy father's dead:
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobance.

Oth. 'Tis pitiful; but Cassio confess'd it:
And she did gratify [13] his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emil. O Heaven! O heavenly powers!

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'Twill out, 'twill out! I peace!
No, I will speak as liberal as the north: [14]
Let Heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wise, and get you home.

Emil. I will not.

[IAGO *offers to stab* EMILIA.

Gra. Fie!
Your sword upon a woman?

[13] *Gratify* here is explained by Walker "*express her gratitude for, recompense.*" A singular use of the word, but involving no real obscurity.

[14] Meaning, to be sure, "I will be as *free*, as *unrestrained*, in speech, as the north *wind* is in blowing."

Emil. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of
I found by fortune, and did give my husband;
For often, with a solemn earnestness —
More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle —
He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Villainous wanton!

Emil. She give it Cassio! no, alas, I found it,
And I did give't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest!

Emil. By Heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen. —
O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

Oth. Are there no stones in Heaven
But what serve for the thunder?[15] — Precious villain!

[OTHELLO *offers to stab* IAGO, *but is disarmed by* MONTANO: IAGO *stabs* EMILIA, *and then runs out.*

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay. O, lay me by my mistress' side.

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain.[16] Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damnèd slave. [*Exeunt* MONTANO *and* GRATIANO.

Oth. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword:

[15] Thunder-*stone* is the old name for thunder-*bolt*. Othello means, "Has Heaven no bolts to spare from the work of thunder for the special purpose of hurling at such villains?"

[16] Iago could not be called a *notorious* villain in our sense of the word, as his villainy was not *known*." But Shakespeare uses the word with considerable license, and has it repeatedly very much in the sense of *egregious* or *outrageous*. See page 161, note 12.

But why should honour outlive honesty? [17]
Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,
And die in music: [Sings.] *Willow, willow, willow.* —
Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;
So come my soul to bliss as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die, — I die. [*Dies.*

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber;
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper: [18]
O, here it is. — Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. [*Within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear:
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me, then, and speak with me,
Or, naked [19] as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

Gra. What is the matter?

Oth. Behold, I have a weapon;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh: I've seen the day

[17] The meaning, here, is obscure, owing to an uncommon use of words. *Honour* is put for *valour*, as the context shows, because to be valiant was held the corner-stone of a man's honour. *Honesty*, again, has the sense of *honour*. The usage was not uncommon. So in North's Plutarch, *Life of Coriolanus:* "Thinkest thou it is not *honesty* for thee to grant thy mother's request, in so weighty a cause?" See, also, *Hamlet*, page 105, note 29.

[18] The way of tempering steel is by plunging it red-hot into cold water; and the colder the water, the higher the temper attained. Steevens has shown from Martial and Justin that in Spain the waters of the Salo and the Chalybes, being remarkable for coldness, were used in tempering swords. As Toledo blades were famous all over Europe in the Poet's time, he might easily learn that they were of "the ice-brook's temper" without going to classical authorities.

[19] *Naked* here is *unarmed*, or naked *of weapons*.

That, with this little arm and this good sword,
I've made my way through more impediments
That twenty times your stop: but, O vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,[20]
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear:
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go? —
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,[21]
This look of thine will hurl my soul from Heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
Even like thy chastity. —
O cursèd, cursèd slave! — Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds![22] roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire! —
O Desdemon! dead, Desdemon! dead! O! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO *carried in a Chair, and* Officers *with* IAGO, *Prisoner.*

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

[20] *Butt* was a term in archery for the *mark*, that is, the *end*, at which the shots were aimed.

[21] *At compt* is *at the judgment*, the day of *reckoning* or of *account*. Shakespeare has the word several times thus. See *Macbeth*, page 72, note 13.

[22] Probably the best comment on this is in *Measure for Measure*, iii. 1:

> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbèd ice;
> To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world.

Oth. That's he that was Othello: here I am.

Lod. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet,[23] — but that's a fable. — If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. [*Wounds* IAGO.

Lod. Wrench his sword from him. [OTHELLO *is disarmed.*

Iago. I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither: I'd have thee live; For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

Lod. O thou Othello, that wert once so good, Fall'n in the practice[24] of a damnèd slave, What shall be said to thee?

Oth. Why, any thing: An honourable murderer, if you will; For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy: Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask your pardon. Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

Iago. Demand me nothing: what you know, you know: From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What, not to pray?

Gra. Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,

[23] Alluding to the Devil's *fabled* cloven foot. Othello looks down towards Iago's feet, to see if he has that sign of being a devil, but then concludes that he may be just as much a devil without it. In what follows, he implies that devils are in their nature *immortal.*

[24] *Practice*, again, for *plot*, *stratagem*, or *device*. See page 141, note 10.

Which, as I think, you know not. Here's a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;
And here another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villainy!

Cas. Most heathenish and most gross!

Lod. Now here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant t' have sent this damnèd villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O, the pernicious caitiff!—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd but even now
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool! fool! fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: and even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us:
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,
If there be any cunning cruelty
That can torment him much and hold him long,
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,

Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian State. — Come, bring away.

Oth. Soft you! a word or two before you go.
I've done the State some service, and they know't;
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme;[25] of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe;[26] of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unusèd to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their médicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,

[25] That is, "but *who*, being wrought *upon*, was perplexed in the extreme."— Walker remarks that "*perplexed*, as Shakespeare understood it, meant much more than with us." And he cites various examples showing that the word was used of the most agonizing states of mind.

[26] Hereupon Coleridge has the following: "Othello wishes to excuse himself on the score of ignorance, and yet not excuse himself, — to excuse himself by accusing. This struggle of feeling is finely conveyed in the word *base*, which is applied to the rude Indian, not in his own character, but as the momentary representative of Othello's." — Whether Shakespeare meant an allusion to any particular story of an Indian, or to the Indians as generally described, is not quite clear; probably, the latter. So in Drayton's *Legend of Matilda*. "The *wretched Indian spurnes the golden ore*." Also, in *The Woman's Conquest*, by Sir Edward Howard: "Behold my queen, who with no more concern Ile *cast away then Indians do a pearl*, that ne'er did know its value." And in Habington's *Castara*:

> So the *unskilfull Indian those bright gems*,
> Which might adde majestie to diadems,
> *'Mong the waves scatters*.

Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian [27] and traduced the State,
I took by th' throat the circumcisèd dog,
And smote him — thus. [*Stabs himself with a dagger.*[28]

Lod. O bloody period!

Gra. All that's spoke is marr'd.

Oth. I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this,
[*Falling upon* DESDEMONA.
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [*Dies.*

Cas. This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.

Lod. [*To* IAGO.] O Spartan dog,[29]
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work: — the object poisons sight;
Let it be hid. — Gratiano, keep [30] the house,
And seize upon [31] the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you. — To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure [32] of this hellish villain,
The time, the place, the torture; O, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the State
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [*Exeunt.*

[27] It is said to have been immediate death for a Christian to strike a Turk in Aleppo.

[28] As Othello has been twice disarmed of his sword, first, on his offering to stab Iago, and then on his wounding Iago, we have to suppose that in stabbing himself he uses a dagger which he has hitherto kept concealed.

[29] The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind.

[30] *Keep* in the sense of *guard* or *watch*. Repeatedly so. See *The Winter's Tale*, page 67, note 14.

[31] *Seize upon* here means *take possession of;* a law term, used thus in divers other places. See *Much Ado*, page 125, note 2.

[32] "The *censure*" is the *judgment* or the *sentencing:* as the word was commonly used. See page 102, note 17.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Act I., Scene 1.

Page 48. *Three great ones of the city,*
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Oft capp'd *to him.* — So the quartos. The folio has "*Off-cap* to him." This is preferred by some editors on the ground that to *cap* meant to *keep the cap on.* But the word was certainly used for the common ceremony of taking off the cap or hat as a mark of deference. See foot-note 2.

P. 48. *And, in conclusion, nonsuits my mediators;*
For, certes, *says he,* I've already chose
My officer. *And what was he?* — So the first quarto. The other old copies omit "And, in conclusion." The originals have no indication as to how much of the passage was meant to be taken as a quotation from Othello; and editors differ somewhat on that point. I am not sure but the word *For* should be so taken; but Dyce and the Cambridge Editors think otherwise.

P. 48. *A fellow almost damn'd in a fair* wight. — Instead of *wight* the old copies have *Wife,* with which nearly all are dissatisfied, and which cannot indeed be explained to any fitting sense but by methods too subtile and recondite. A good many different changes have been made or proposed. Tyrwhitt conjectured "a fair *life*"; and Coleridge thinks this reading "the true one, as fitting to Iago's contempt for whatever did not display power, and that, intellectual power." Mr. White reads "in a fair *wise*"; not very happily, I think. Of all the readings hitherto offered, I prefer Capell's *face.* It suits the occasion and the speaker very well: for Iago dwells much on Cassio's handsomeness of person; recurs to it again and again; and builds his

scheme partly on that circumstance, as if he longed to make it the ruin of Cassio, sure enough. On the other hand, however, Iago's thought may well have been, that Cassio was badly damaged by the fascinations of a handsome mistress; thus referring to the amorous intrigue with Bianca, which comes out so strongly in the course of the play. So I am satisfied that we ought to read *wight*. It seems to me a very natural and fitting word for the place; and, if spelt phonographically, *wite*, might easily be misprinted *wife*; and Iago seems rather fond of using it scoffingly in reference to women. It may not be amiss to note further, that Iago's talk about Cassio is full of contempt: he is sneering at him both as a soldier and as a man; and Cassio's lickerous infatuation is an apt handle for his scorn to take hold of. And so both *fellow* and *wife*, or whatever may be the right word, are used by him contemptuously; and it would be quite in character for him to speak of Cassio either as a coxcomb almost spoiled by his own good looks, or as a fellow bewitched well-nigh out of his senses with a fair fancy-girl. — Mr. Arrowsmith, however, contends stoutly for the old text. He multiplies words rather profusely in order to make out that the meaning is, that such a character, or such soldiership, as Cassio's would be almost condemned in a woman. This is indeed a good meaning in itself; but to transmute the Poet's words into it, requires more of hermeneutical alchemy than I am master of. *Fellow* does not signify *character* or *soldiership* in any author that I am acquainted with. Besides, this meaning is sufficiently expressed in what follows. And Mr. Arrowsmith's interpretation would, I think, bring us to this: "Cassio's soldiership would be almost contemptible in an ordinary woman; and he knows no more how to order a battle than an ordinary woman does." Surely a reading that prompts or requires an explanation so forced and far-fetched may well be distrusted. It has set me more than ever against the old text. See foot-note 4.

P. 49. *Unless the bookish Theoric,*
Wherein the togèd *consuls can propose*
As masterly as he. — So the first quarto. The other old copies have "the *Tongued* Consuls," which some prefer, as agreeing better with the context, "mere *prattle*, without practice," &c. But surely *togèd* is the right word. See foot-note 6. The folio has a like error in *Coriolanus*.

P. 50. *And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,*
Well thrive by them, and, when they've lined their coats,
Do themselves homage. — So Pope. The old copies have "*Doe* well thrive by them"; the transcriber's or printer's eye having probably caught *Doe* in the next line.

Act I., Scene 2.

P. 59. *You* had *been hotly call'd for;*
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The Senate sent about *three several quests*
To search you out. — In the first of these lines, the old copies read "you *have* bin hotly call'd for." The correction is Lettsom's. In the third line, the quartos read "The Senate sent *above* three"; the folio, "The Senate *hath* sent *about* three."

P. 60. *Keep up your bright swords,* for *the dew will rust them.* — Walker would read *or* instead of *for*. Perhaps rightly.

P. 61. *Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals*
That waken *motion.* — So Hanmer. The old copies read "That *weaken* motion." Theobald printed "weaken *notion*"; as the Poet sometimes uses *notion* for *mind* or *judgment*. Ritson says that "to *weaken motion* is to *impair the faculties*"; but that surely is a strange use of language. See foot-note 16.

Act I., Scene 3.

P. 64. *Have there injointed with an after fleet.* — So the first quarto. The other old copies have "injointed *them* with"; thus spoiling the rhythm without helping the sense. See foot-note 7.

P. 66. *What conjuration, and what mighty magic,* —
For such proceeding I am charged withal, —
I won his daughter with. — So the second folio. The earlier editions omit *with*.

P. 67. Duke. *To vouch this, is no proof:*
Without more certain *and more* overt *test,*
These are *thin habits and poor likelihoods*

Of modern seeming, you *prefer against him.* — So the quartos, except that they have *seemings* instead of *seeming*. The folio, doubtless by mere accident, omits the prefix, thus making these lines a continuation of Brabantio's speech, and then reads as follows:

> To vouch this, is no proofe,
> Without more *wider*, and more *over* Test
> *Then these* thin habits, and poore likely-hoods
> Of moderne *seeming*, *do* prefer against him.

P. 68. *Of my redemption thence,*

And portance in *my* travels' *history.* — So the quarto of 1630. The first quarto reads "And *with it all* my travells Historie"; the folio, "And portance in my *Travellours* historie."

P. 71. *For* my own *sake, jewel,*
I'm glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny, &c. — The old copies read "For *your* sake"; which can nowise be made to tally with the context, except by taking the phrase as equivalent to *on your account*, — a sense which, to be sure, it sometimes bears. Lettsom justly observes, "The sense, as well as the metre, requires 'For *my own* sake, jewel.'"

P. 71. *Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence*, &c. — This and the twenty-one following lines, down to "'Beseech you, now proceed to the affairs of State," are most certainly an interpolation. The style of them is altogether unlike that of the surrounding matter: it is ambitious, artificial, and studied, in the highest degree. In a dramatic regard, also, the lines are a sheer incumbrance, and serve no purpose but to interrupt and embarrass the proper course of the scene. Besides, the preceding speech of Brabantio has fully and formally prepared the way for the Duke's speech, "The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus," &c.

P. 72. *'Beseech you, now proceed to the affairs of State.* — The quartos read "Beseech you now, to the affairs of *the* State"; the folio, "*I humbly* beseech you proceed to th' Affaires of State."

P. 73. *That I did love the Moor to live with him,*
My downright violence and storm *of fortunes*
May trumpet to the world. — So the folio and the quarto of 1630: the quarto of 1622 has *scorn* instead of *storm*. *Scorn* will not cohere with *violence*, unless by making it express a quality of Desdemona herself, not of her fortunes; the sense in that case being, "my downright violence of behaviour, and scorn of fortune." She evidently means the violence and storm of fortunes which she has *braved* or *encountered* in marrying the Moor, and not any thing of a violent or scornful temper in herself.

P. 74. *Nor to comply* wi' th' *heat* of *young affects,* —
In me *defunct,* — but for her *satisfaction,*
And *to be free and bounteous to her mind.* — The old copies read as follows:

> Nor to comply *with* heat *the* yong affects
> In *my* defunct, *and proper* satisfaction.
> *But* to be free, and bounteous to her minde.

Few passages in Shakespeare have troubled the editors more than this; and the mass of conjectural criticism which it has evoked is almost enough to strike one with dismay. Upton proposed the change of *my* into *me*, — "In *me* defunct"; and since that time the passage has commonly been printed thus:

> Nor to comply with heat — the young affects
> In *me* defunct — and proper satisfaction;
> But to be free and bounteous to her mind.

But I have never been able to rest satisfied with this reading: it seems to me harsh and awkward beyond Shakespeare's utmost license of language. In the first line, the reading here given is my own. The Poet has a great many instances of the double contraction, *wi' th'* for *with the;* and in not a few cases I have found the contraction misprinted *with*. So in *The Tempest*, i. 1: "Bring her to Try *with* Maine-course." And again in the same scene: "Let's all sink *with'* King." In both these cases — and there are more like them — the sense of *with the* is clearly required, and accordingly I print *wi' th'*. The transcriber or printer probably did not understand that point, in the present passage, and therefore sophisticated the text into the shape

in which it has come down to us. For the reading in the second and third lines I am indebted to Mr. P. A. Daniel; and it seems to me one of the happiest emendations ever made of the Poet's text. Nor can the changes be justly termed violent; as *forher* might easily get misprinted *proper;* and such transpositions as *and* and *but* are among the commonest of typographical errors. I must add that to "comply with one's own satisfaction" is not and never was English, as it seems to me. See foot-note 32.

P. 75. *When light-wing'd toys*
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
My speculative and active instruments, &c. — So the quartos. The folio has "and *offic'd Instrument.*"

P. 78. *She will find the* error *of her choice:* she must have change, she must: *therefore put money in thy purse.* — So the quartos. The folio has "the *errors* of her choice," and omits "she must have change, she must."

P. 79. Iago. *No more of drowning, do you hear?*
Rod. *I am changed:* I'll go sell all my land.
Iago. *Go to; farewell: put money enough in your purse.* —
[Exit Roderigo.
Thus do I ever make my fool my purse. — So the first quarto, except that it lacks "I'll go sell all my land," and places the *exit* of Roderigo before the third line instead of after it. The second quarto omits the third line altogether, but has "I'll go sell all my land." The folio has nothing of the first three lines, except "Ile sell all my Land."

Act II., Scene I.

P. 82. *The ship is here put in,*
La Veronesa; *Michael Cassio,*
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,
Is come on shore: the Moor himself's *at sea,* &c. — In the second of these lines, the old copies have "*A* Veronessa," and "*A* Verennessa." This has bred some doubt whether the name referred to

the ship or to Cassio, as if the speaker supposed him to be a *Veronese*. The substitution of *La* for *A* is Mr. P. A. Daniel's, and of course makes *Veronesa* the *name* of the ship. In the fourth line, the old copies have "the Moore *himselfe* at Sea." The correction is Rowe's.

P. 82. *Thanks* to *the valiant of* this warlike *isle*,
That so approve the Moor! — So the first quarto, except that it has *worthy* instead of *warlike*. The second quarto has the same, except that it omits *worthy*. The folio reads "Thankes *you*, the valiant of *the* warlike Isle."

P. 83. *His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot*
Of very expert and approved allowance;
Therefore my hopes, not suffocate *to death*,
Stand in bold cure. — The old copies read "not *surfeited* to death." As Cassio evidently has apprehensions about Othello's safety, how he can either be said to have *any surfeit* of hope, or be said *not* to have a *deadly* surfeit of hope, quite passes my comprehension. Knight explains, "As 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' so hope upon hope, without realization, is a surfeit of hope"; but this seems to me absurdly, not to say ridiculously, forced. Cassio's meaning appears to be, that his hopes of the Moor's safety would have been drowned to death in that terrible sea, but for the strong ship and good pilot. Johnson, not being able to understand how hope could be increased till it were destroyed, conjectured "not *forfeited* to death." I was for a while in doubt whether to read "not *suffocate to* death" or, "not *sick yet unto* death"; but on the whole preferred the former as involving somewhat less of change, and as being perhaps rather more in Shakespeare's manner. See foot-note 8.

P. 84. *One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,*
And in th' essential vesture of creation
Does tire the ingener. — The quartos read "Does *bear all excellency*," except that the second has *an* instead of *all*. This reading has been justly set down as "flat and unpoetical." The folio reads "Do's tyre the *Ingeniver*." The last word is most likely a misprint for *ingener*. See foot-note 9.

P. 84. *Great* God, *Othello guard,*

And swell his sail with Thine own powerful breath, &c. — The old copies have "Great *Jove*." "For this absurdity," says Malone, "I have not the smallest doubt that the Master of the Revels, and not our Poet, is answerable." The same "absurdity" occurs in several other places. See note on "*God* and my stars be praised," &c., *Twelfth Night*, page 145.

P. 88. *Is he not a most profane and liberal* censurer? — So Theobald and Collier's second folio. The old copies have *Counsailor* instead of *censurer*.

P. 93. *If this poor* brach *of Venice, whom I* trash

For his quick hunting, stand the putting-on, &c. — So Collier's second folio. All the old copies have *trash* instead of *brach;* while, instead of *trash*, the first quarto has *crush*, and the folio and second quarto have *trace*. Theobald reads "This poor *brach* of Venice, whom I *trace*." See foot-note 34.

Act II., Scene 3.

P. 99. *I fear the trust Othello puts* in him, &c. — So Capell and Lettsom. The old copies have "puts *him in*."

P. 101. *Have you forgot all* sense of place *and duty?* Hold!

The general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame! — The old copies read "all *place* of *sence*, and duty." They also print the first *Hold* at the beginning of the second line, thus: "Hold. The Generall speaks to you:" &c.

P. 103. *Shall lose me. What! in a town* with *war*

Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,

To manage private and domestic quarrel,

In night, and on the court of guard and *safety!* — In the first and second of these lines, the old copies read "in a Towne of warre, Yet wilde," &c. But what is a *town of war?* or what can the phrase mean? The reading in the text is Mr. P. A. Daniel's. Of course it

means "in a town yet wild with war." — To complete the metre of the first line, Capell printed "Shall *loosen* me." But that, I think, defeats the right sense. Hanmer reads "What, *and* in," &c. But should it not rather be "What! *even* in a town," &c.? — In the last line, also, the old copies read "on the Court *and guard of* safety." Corrected by Theobald.

P. 103. *If, partially affined, or* leagued *in office*, &c. — The old copies have *league* instead of *leagued.*

P. 104. *And Cassio following with determined sword*
To execute upon him. — The old copies have "Cassio following *him*"; — probably an accidental repetition from the next line. Corrected by Pope.

P. 105. *Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon.* —
[*To* MONTANO, *who is led off.*
— The old copies here add to the text "Lead him off," but have no stage-direction. Doubtless, as Malone thought, those words were meant for a stage-direction, and got misprinted as part of the text. A very frequent error.

P. 109. *Myself* the *while to draw the Moor apart*, &c. — So Theobald. The old copies have "Myselfe *a* while," and "Myselfe *awhile.*"

ACT III., SCENE 3.

P. 113. O sir, *I thank you. You do love my lord:* &c. — So the quartos. The folio reads "*I know't:* I thanke you," which some editors prefer, I do not understand why.

P. 115. *Save that, they say, the wars must make examples*
Out of the *best.* — So Singer. The old copies have "Out of *her* best." Rowe printed "Out of *their* best."

P. 116. *Or sue to you to do peculiar profit*
To your own person. — So Pope. The old copies read "to do *a* peculiar profit," &c. We have many like instances of *a* palpably interpolated.

P. 117. Think, my lord! — *By Heaven, he echoes me,*
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. — So the first quarto. The folio reads "*Alas thou eccho'st* me; As if there were some Monster in *thy* thought," &c.; the second quarto, "*Why dost thou ecchoe* me," &c. It is not easy to choose between these three readings, but I am strongly inclined to prefer the last.

P. 119. *As, I confess, it is my nature's plague*
To spy into abuses, and oft *my jealousy*
Shapes faults that are not, &c. — I here follow the reading of the quartos, with which the folio agrees, except that it has *of* instead of *oft*. It has been proposed to read "*of* my jealousy," and change *shapes* into *shape*. At first sight, this is plausible, as it satisfies the grammar perfectly. But jealousy is itself, evidently, the "nature's plague" of which Iago is speaking. So that the sense would be, "It is my nature's plague to spy into abuses, and of my *nature's plague to shape* faults that are not"; which comes pretty near being nonsense. On the other hand, if we read, "It is my nature's plague to spy into abuses, and oft my *nature's plague* shapes faults that are not," the language is indeed not good, but the sense is perfect.

P. 120. *It is the green-eyed monster, which doth* make
The meat it feeds on. — So Hanmer and a large majority of the editors since his time. The old text has *mocke* instead of *make*, and several recent editors have gone back to the former. But that reading seems to me a stark absurdity; while, on the other hand, there cannot well be a truer description of jealousy than that it creates its own food. To be sure, some manage to rack and extort from *mock* a certain dim and vague show of fitness: for so minds "green in judgment" are apt to be infected, as in my "salad days" I was myself, with a fond conceit of ingenuity that will undertake to explain any thing; but, as men grow and ripen into a love of plainness and simplicity, all such superfineness of explanation appears to them simply ridiculous. Of late years, Shakespeare has suffered a good deal from these exquisite tormentors of words. See foot-note 16.

P. 132. *And, being troubled with a raging tooth,*
I could not sleep. There are a kind of men
So loose of soul, that in their sleeps will mutter
Of *their affairs: one of this kind is Cassio.* — So Walker. The old copies have a different arrangement of the lines, and are without *Of* in the last line.

P. 133. *If it be that, or any* that *was hers,*
It speaks against her with the other proofs. — The old copies read "or any, *it* was hers." Corrected by Malone.

P. 133. *Arise, black vengeance, from* the *hollow* Hell! — So the folio. The quartos have "from *thy* hollow *cell*"; which is strangely preferred by several editors. To speak of a hollow cell as the abode of vengeance seems very tame. Besides, as Othello has just blown all his love to *Heaven,* harmony of thought and language seems to require that he should invoke revenge from *Hell.* See foot-note 52.

P. 133. *Whose icy current and compulsive course*
Ne'er feels *retiring ebb, but keeps due on,* &c. — So the quarto of 1630. The passage is not in the first quarto; and the folio reads "Nev'r *keepes* retyring ebbe, but keepes due on." Collier's second folio has "Ne'er *knows* retiring ebb."

P. 134. *And to obey shall be in me remorse,*
What bloody work soe'er. — So the quartos. The folio has "What bloody *business ever.*"

Act III., Scene 4.

P. 140. *That nor my service past, nor present* sorrow,
Nor purposed merit in futurity, &c. — So Walker. The old copies have *Sorrowes* instead of *sorrow.* The confounding of plurals and singulars is very frequent.

Act IV., Scene 1.

P. 147. *Or I shall say you're all-in-all* one *spleen,*
And nothing of a man. — So Lettsom. The old copies read "all in all *in* Spleene." Capell printed "all in all *a* spleen."

P. 152. God *save* the *worthy general.* — So the quarto of 1622. The other old copies read "Save *you* worthy Generall." Probably, in this instance, the former reading escaped the Master of the Revels.

Act iv., Scene 2.

P. 157. *Had it pleased Heaven*
To try me with affliction; had He *rain'd*
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head; &c. — So the quartos. The folio reads "had *they* rain'd," &c. In support of the latter, Dyce shows that the Poet sometimes uses Heaven as a collective noun; but he does not show that he constantly uses it so.

P. 158. *A fixèd figure for the time of scorn*
To point his slow unmoving finger *at.* — So the quartos, except that the first has *fingers* instead of *finger*, and that both add, after *at*, "— oh, oh." The folio has "*The* fixed figure," and "To point his slow, *and moving* finger at." The passage has elicited a good deal of comment, and various changes have been proposed, of which the only one that seems to me much worth pausing upon is Hunter's, "The fixed figure *of* the time, *for* scorn To point," &c. I add White's comment on the second line: "Some have chosen the reading of the folio, on the ground that if the finger of scorn be 'slow,' it must move, and therefore 'unmoving' is an incongruous epithet! But surely the finger of scorn is unmoving, because it does not move *from its object*, but points at him fixedly and relentlessly." See foot-note 4.

P. 160. *How have I been behaved, that he might stick*
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse? — So the first quarto. The other old copies have *least misuse* instead of *great'st abuse*. But we cannot take *on* here as equivalent to *of*, for the connection is *stick on*, and not *opinion on;* so that *least* does not give the right sense. See foot-note 9.

P. 162. *If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,*
Either in discourse, or *thought, or actual deed;* &c. — So the quarto of 1630. The passage is not in the first quarto; and the folio has

"discourse *of* thought." With the latter there is no fault to be found on the score of language; for Shakespeare elsewhere has "discourse of reason," which is but an equivalent phrase. See *Hamlet*, page 63, note 33. But the quarto reading is, I think, more in accordance with the solemn and impressive particularity of the speaker's asseveration of her innocence. And it may well be understood as referring to the three forms of sin, "by thought, word, and deed," specified in the old catechisms and the eucharistical confession of the Church.

P. 163. *I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself* fopp'd *in it.* — So all the old copies. Modern editions generally change *fopp'd* to *fobb'd*, and perhaps rightly, as to *fob* is to *cheat*, to *put off by a trick*, to *evade;* a sense that well fits the occasion. See, however, foot-note 18.

Act IV., Scene 3.

P. 166. *My mother had a maid call'd* Barbara. — The old copies have *Barbary* and *Barbarie;* and so the name was probably pronounced. Many people now pronounce *Martha* as if it were spelt *Marthy*.

P. 167. *And she died singing it. I've much to-do*

Not *to go hang my head all at one side*, &c. — So Hamner and Collier's second folio: Theobald also conjectured the same. The old copies have "*But* to go hang," &c. With *But*, the construction is, "I've much to-do *to do any thing* but to go hang"; which, to say the least, is exceedingly awkward and harsh. We have many instances of *but* and *not* misprinted for each other.

Act V., Scene 1.

P. 171. *No, he must die:* be't *so; I hear him coming.* — So the quartos. The folio has "*But* so." Dyce conjectures "but *soft!* I hear him coming." And so I suspect it should be.

Act V., Scene 2.

P. 177. *Put out the light, — and then put out* thy *light*, &c. — The old copies read "and then put out *the* light." The reading in the text

is Hanmer's, and is, I think, fully justified by the context; as we have, just below, "but once put out *thy* light," and "That can *thy* light relume."

P. 180. Oth. *It is too late.* [Smothers her.

Emil. [*Within.*] *My lord, my lord! what, ho!* &c. — So the folio and the second quarto. The first quarto inserts between these two speeches "*Des.* O Lord, Lord, Lord."

P. 181. *The noise was high. — Ha! no more moving?* still,

Still as the grave. — So Walker. The first *still* is not in the old copies. The metre certainly wants it, and the sense even more, perhaps, than the metre.

P. 181. *O, my good lord, yonder's foul* murder *done!* — The old copies have *murders* instead of *murder*. The correction is Theobald's.

P. 187. *Are there no stones in Heaven*

But what serve for the thunder? — Precious *villain!* — So the first quarto and the folio. The second quarto has "*Pernicious* villain." And so I more than suspect we ought to read; for there is ground, surely, for Lettsom's remark, that "'*Precious* villain' is more in the style of Cloten than of Othello."

P. 189. O *Desdemon! dead, Desdemon! dead! O! O!* — So the folio. The quartos have the line as follows:

O *Desdemona, Desdemona,* dead, O, o, *o.*

P. 191. Oth. *O* villainy!

Cas. *Most heathenish and most gross!* — The old copies have *Villaine* instead of *villainy*. Walker says, "*Villainy* of course; and so also Ritson."

P. 191. *And he himself confess'd but even now*

That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose, &c. — The first quarto reads "confest *it* even now"; the other old copies, "confest *it* but even now."

P. 192. *Of one whose hand,*
Like the base Indian, *threw a pearl away*
Richer than all his tribe; &c. — So the quartos. The folio has *Judean* instead of *Indian*. See foot-note 26.

P. 192. *Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees*
Their médicinal *gum.* — So the quartos. The folio has *Medicinable.*